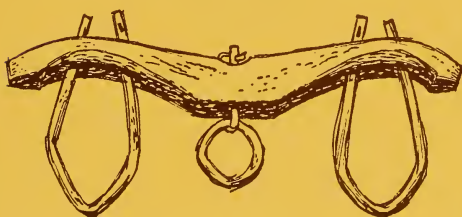


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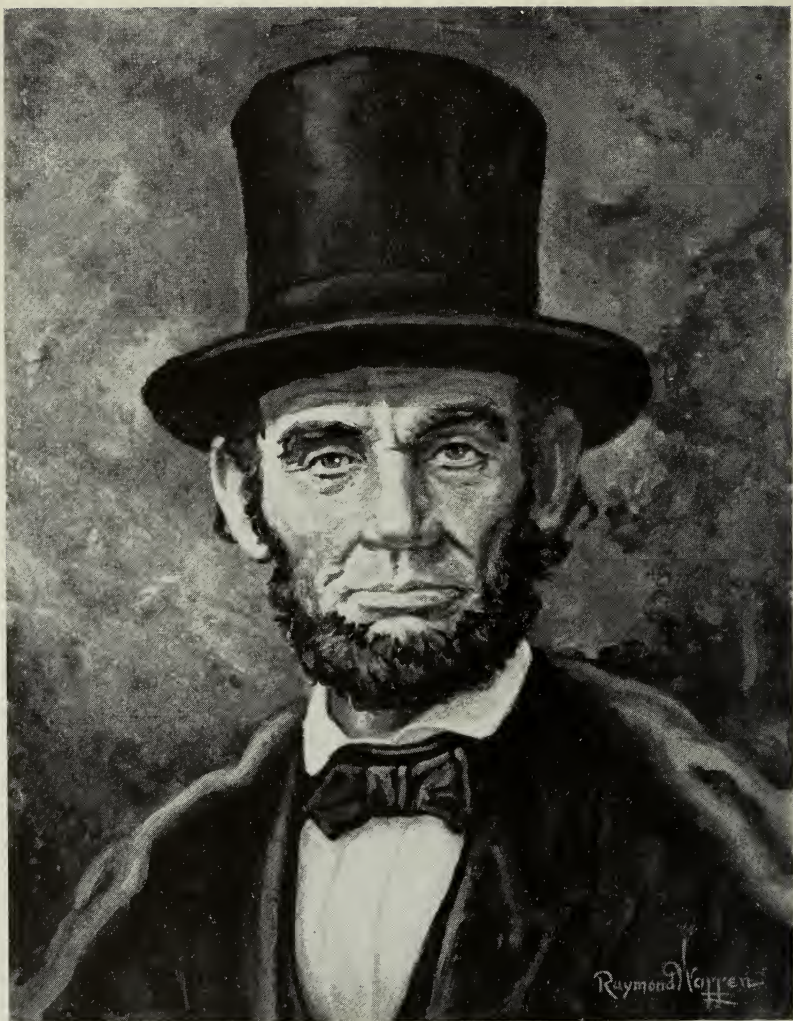


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# Lincoln Group Papers

Twelve Addresses Delivered Before the Lincoln Group  
of Chicago on Varied Aspects of Abraham  
Lincoln's Life and Interests

*Second Series*



*Published by*

J. HENRI RIPSTRA

*Founder of*

THE LINCOLN GROUP  
OF CHICAGO

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Organizations that continue active for more than a dozen years must have a vital and worthwhile purpose. Such an organization is the Lincoln Group of Chicago, founded on February 18, 1931, by J. Henri Ripstra, medallic sculptor, collector and student of Lincolniana. The Group has held regular meetings attended by a large per cent of the two hundred members, which includes doctors, lawyers, judges and other professional men.

The Lincoln Memorial University honored Mr. Ripstra by awarding him the diploma of honor in recognition of his distinguished work and efforts in extolling the lives of Abraham Lincoln and his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln.

Mr. Ripstra's guiding hand has kept the Group concentrated upon its objective — increased knowledge and understanding of the life of Abraham Lincoln. Admirers of Lincoln throughout the country have attended the meetings, and, struck with their purpose and vitality, have organized groups in their own communities.

Papers read at the meetings have touched nearly every phase of the life of Lincoln. The country's outstanding authorities and students of his career have appeared before the Group. Ten of the papers read before the Group in 1934-1935 were published in a volume in 1936 under the title *Lincoln Group Papers*. Some meetings are given over to round-table discussion of the many controverted issues in Lincoln's career. The late Alexander W. Hannah

furnished a special Lincoln Room in the Brevoort Hotel where meetings were held for several years. The Group now meets at the LaSalle Hotel.

The wide-spread acceptance of *Lincoln Group Papers* as a worthy and outstanding contribution to Lincolniana has prompted the publication of a "Second Series" of twelve papers in this volume. That the interest in Lincoln is not confined to one spot in the country is shown by the authors of the papers. Chicago claims four, Peoria two, and one each in places as far apart as Los Angeles, Detroit, Muncie, Indiana, Davenport, Iowa, and Petersburg and Danville, Illinois. The subjects discussed are as varied as the homes of the authors. Three papers treat of Lincoln's friends, two intimates, William H. Herndon and Ward H. Lamon, and a young friend who became a great admirer, Robert G. Ingersoll. Two papers treat of important events in Lincoln's life — the debates with Douglas in 1858, and the Gettysburg Address.

The religious environment of his boyhood and the intellectual influences surrounding him immediately after he left the parental roof are discussed in separate papers. Other topics are as varied as his personal finances, rise in politics from 1854, influence upon the foreign policy of his administration, and the lessons of his life for the youth of today.



LINCOLN OF ILLINOIS





## SOME RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES WHICH SURROUNDED LINCOLN

M. L. HOUSER \*

In a campaign biography of Abraham Lincoln for which he furnished much of the material, we are told that, while he was a child in Kentucky, he and his sister frequently read the Bible aloud on the Sabbath. This custom, no doubt, was continued after their removal to Indiana; and he once said that reading the Bible was the greatest comfort they had during the dreary months which followed his mother's death.<sup>1</sup> Not one, however, of the hundreds who have written reminiscences about his later years, so far as I know, have mentioned his reading the Scriptures at New Salem, on the circuit, or while living at Springfield. On the other hand, many have told of the diversion and comfort he seemed to derive from reading the *Bible*, and a special copy of the *Book of Psalms*, during the stress and strain of the Civil War.<sup>2</sup> His ability to quote in full

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\* M. L. Houser, Peoria, is a leading authority on the books Lincoln studied, and has published several monographs in his favorite field of study.

<sup>1</sup> Rankin, 320 (See Bibliography for complete titles of sources.)

<sup>2</sup> Barton, 275; Chapman, 299-318; Johnstone, in *The Monitor* for March 21, 1935.

According to William J. Johnstone, author of *Lincoln, the Christian* and *How Lincoln Prayed*, the American Bible Society presented President Lincoln with a morocco-bound copy of the *Book of Psalms* which bore Lincoln's name in gold letters on the front cover. The type was unusually large and clear. This copy was later presented by Mrs. Lincoln to William Read, whose daughters, in turn, gave it to Dr. Johnstone. A nurse employed in the White House said that President Lincoln often

almost any passage of Scripture which might be mentioned, often giving chapter and verse, was the wonder of his associates at Washington.<sup>3</sup>

§ § §

Pioneer Kentucky was predominantly Baptist. The Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, Cumberland Presbyterians, New Lights, and other denominations had churches there; but as late as 1820, the Baptists outnumbered all others put together.<sup>4</sup>

The Baptist church in Kentucky was then divided into two main groups: the Regular Baptists, who adhered to the Philadelphia Confession of Faith; and the Separate Baptists, who accepted only the Bible as their guide.<sup>5</sup> While living on their Knob Creek farm, Thomas and Nancy Lincoln were members of the Little Mount Separate Baptist Church.<sup>6</sup>

§ § §

The Separate movement originated in New England. In 1740, George Whitefield, who had been associated with John and Charles Wesley, preached evangelistic sermons for two months in the New England colonies. There were then but twenty-five congregations of Baptists in all of New England. Some of their ministers and members favored the holding of revivals, but a larger number objected to this innovation. Those who separated from the Baptist congregations on that account were called Separate Baptists.<sup>7</sup>

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read this book when tired, and that he once remarked that it contained "something for every day in the week."

<sup>3</sup> Barton, 93-94; Johnstone, 152-57; Curtis, 387; Angle, 258.

<sup>4</sup> Spencer, I, 496, 579.

<sup>5</sup> Spencer, I, 104, 107, 176, 482; Warren, 233-34; Barton, 36-37.

In Coles County, Illinois, Thomas and Sarah Lincoln united with a Disciple congregation, which, like Separate Baptist churches, had no creed except the Bible.

<sup>6</sup> Warren, 233-48.

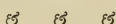
<sup>7</sup> Spencer, I, 104-6.

In the eighteenth century, Congregationalism was the established religion in all of the New England colonies except Rhode Island, and conformity was enforced by



Two men who adhered to this Separate branch of the church — Shubal Stearns and Daniel Marshall — went to the Southern colonies as evangelists, and there preached “with flaming zeal.”<sup>8</sup> Many new churches were organized, especially in Virginia and the Carolinas. Soon after that, a heavy immigration set in toward Kentucky; and of the first twenty-five Baptist preachers who went there, twenty had been Separate Baptists in Virginia or North Carolina.<sup>9</sup>

Most of the Kentucky preachers at that time were uneducated, many of them illiterate. In his *History of Kentucky Baptists*, Spencer tells us that both of the Baptist ministers whom the Lincolns knew best in Kentucky were not only illiterate but addicted to drink.<sup>10</sup>



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civil law. Public worship under other forms was illegal, and punishable by fines, imprisonment, whipping, and banishment. When, in 1740, George Whitefield, an Episcopalian, preached for two months in New England, a great revival followed. Many of the church members and some of the ministers of the Congregational Church, including the pious Jonathan Edwards, favored the revival; more opposed it. Those who favored the revival, and left the established congregations on that account, were called “Separates.” The division of the illegal Baptist church into “Regular” and “Separate” congregations was but an imitation of the breach in the established church.

<sup>8</sup> Spencer, I, 106-7.

<sup>9</sup> Spencer, I, 107, 483.

At one time in Kentucky, John Bailey and William Bledsoe, the two most eloquent and influential preachers among the Separate Baptists there, held that a belief in eternal punishment is grotesque; and taught that the wicked eventually expiate their sins, and are redeemed from torment. This is pertinent to our subject only because of Mr. Lincoln's later dissent from the doctrine of eternal punishment.

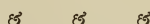
<sup>10</sup> Spencer, I, 163-4, 336.

Of the two preachers whom the Lincolns knew best in Kentucky, William Downs and David Elkin, Spencer says:

[Downs] possessed extraordinary natural gifts, and was one of the most brilliant and fascinating orators in the Kentucky pulpit in his day. But he was indolent, slovenly, and self-indulgent . . . while he always displayed splendid abilities in the pulpit, his moral character was so defective that he exerted little influence for good.

[Elkin] was a man of extraordinary natural intellect, but was uncultivated, being barely able to read. He was extremely poor, as to this world's goods; and what was worse, he was very indolent and slovenly in his dress. . . . His repu-

Young Lincoln's first school teacher, Zachariah Riney, was a Catholic; and his favorite uncle, Mordecai Lincoln, married a Catholic woman, Mary Mudd.<sup>11</sup> Incidentally, this Mary Mudd came from Maryland; and was the fourth cousin of Dr. Samuel A. Mudd, who was accused in 1865 of being a Lincoln conspirator.<sup>12</sup> The boy also had some associations with Methodists and people of other faiths. There seems to be no evidence, however, that he was much, if at all, affected by these rather casual contacts.



In 1816, Thomas Lincoln took his family to southwestern Indiana, and settled about sixteen miles north of the Ohio River. In the fall of 1818, Nancy died. A year later, Thomas returned to Kentucky and married Sarah Johnston. Soon after this, Thomas, Sarah, and his daughter, Sarah, united with the Little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church,

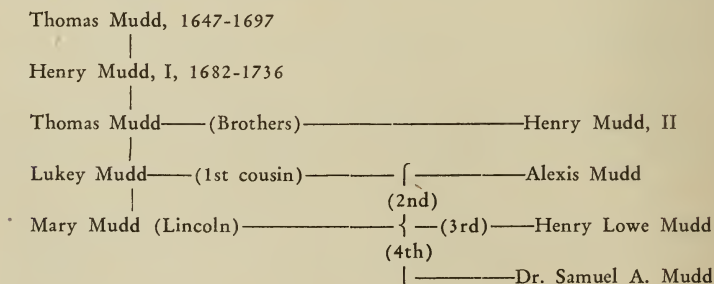
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tation was somewhat sullied in his later years, perhaps from too free use of strong drink.

<sup>11</sup> Warren, 221; Kenny, 23; Whitney, 22.

The Reverend Laurence J. Kenny, S. J., Saint Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri, spent ten years research on the genealogy of the Mudd family; and he then generously passed along the results of his labors to Dr. R. D. Mudd, of Saginaw, Michigan. In an article entitled "A Grand Old Maryland Tree: The Mudds," published in *Historical Records and Studies* for 1935, Father Kenny says that Mordecai Lincoln's household was one of the substantial homes of early Kentucky.

<sup>12</sup> To Dr. Richard Dyer Mudd, grandson of Dr. Samuel A. Mudd — "The Prisoner of Shark Island" — we are indebted for the following chart, which shows that the Mary Mudd who married Mordecai Lincoln in 1792 was a fourth cousin of Dr. Samuel A. Mudd.



a congregation of Regular, or Primitive, sometimes called Hardshell Baptists.<sup>13</sup>

Abraham is said to have helped in the building of the meeting house; to have acted for a time as its janitor; to have attended many services; and, often, after his return home, to have repeated the sermons to which he had listened. It is claimed that he sometimes reproduced such discourses for the satisfaction of his step-mother, when she had been unable to attend; at other times, it is believed, these recitals were accompanied by so close an imitation of the tones and peculiar mannerisms of the preacher that the whole exhibition only served to entertain his youthful and not-too-reverent associates.

The members of the Little Pigeon Creek congregation were opposed to a paid ministry, and were also strongly anti-missionary. The origin of their prejudices against both a paid clergy and missionary societies is not hard to find.

Many of the Western settlers had originally come from Virginia and North Carolina. In those provinces, in colonial days, the English Episcopal Church was the established religion. The country was divided into parishes, each of which contained a comfortable residence, built at public expense. Surrounding the manse was a tract of at least 200 acres of land, called a glebe, the rents from which

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<sup>13</sup> Beveridge, I, 71, 96; Murr, 341-47; Tarbell, 141-45; Spencer, II, 571; Warren in "Lincoln Lore" No. 84.

Among the ministers to whom young Lincoln listened at the Little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church, Dr. Warren mentions Thomas Downs, Samuel Bristow, John Richardson, Young Lamar, Charles Harper, Adam Shoemaker, Charles Polk, and Jeremiah Cash. Thomas Downs was a brother of the William Downs who preached at the Little Mount Baptist Church, in Kentucky, while the Lincolns attended there. He assisted the Little Pigeon Creek congregation to get under way and helped organize there the Little Pigeon Association of United Baptists. Spencer says of him:

He . . . had to do much of his traveling on foot, and often barefooted. . . . Many a time . . . shoeless and coatless. . . . He possessed only medium talents, but he had an easy flow of common English words, his heart was thoroughly educated and deeply imbued with the grace of God, and he was an indefatigable laborer in the gospel of Christ.

Most of those mentioned seem to have been local residents.

inured to the rector; and he was paid, in addition, what seemed to those pioneers to be an exorbitant salary, a proportionate part of which was assessed against each land owner, whether a member of the church or not.<sup>14</sup>

Dissenters from the established church who ventured to preach their own doctrines were subject to prosecution under the law, and were sometimes assessed heavy fines, or given long terms of imprisonment. Those who were accused of preaching contrary to law, and others who escaped from jail, were occasionally pursued with bloodhounds. One writer says that hunting down dissenting preachers with bloodhounds was, at times, the favorite sport of the established clergy.<sup>15</sup>

These Episcopal rectors were educated in England, and often had adopted the ministry as a career. Some of them were not only wanting in piety, but were openly profligate in their lives. Not a few of the Western settlers had once been compelled to pay heavy taxes to support "learned" preachers whose doctrines they abhorred, and they had seen their own ministers prosecuted for teaching what they sincerely believed to be the truth. Spencer says:

A remembrance of these things made the Baptists of Kentucky watchful of any tendency that might possibly lead to a recurrence of such a state of degradation. . . . The opposition . . . was against *theological* schools and missionary *societies*. And this opposition originated in the fear that men would be educated in such schools to the *profession* of the ministry, without regard to a call from God to the sacred office . . . and the misapprehension that power might be invested in such [missionary] societies for the abridgement of religious liberty.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Manross, 11-12, 58-62, 70-79; Spencer, I, 573.

<sup>15</sup> Spencer, I, 28-29, 82.

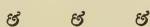
<sup>16</sup> Spencer, I, 574; Dr. John F. Cady, Dean of Franklin College, Franklin, Indiana, in an article entitled "Why Abraham Lincoln Never Joined the Baptist Church," published in *Missions* for February, 1935, and reprinted in *The Monitor*, Grandview, Indiana, on April 4, 1935.

Dr. Cady, a native of Boonville, Indiana, advised the present writer what books



Most of the Little Pigeon Creek settlers had brought with them from Kentucky all of their religious principles and prejudices, and they were often served by the same preachers to whom they had listened at their former homes.

Additional arguments in support of their peculiar tenets were soon forthcoming. On July 14, 1823, Alexander Campbell, who was then associated with the Baptist church, issued the first number of *The Christian Baptist*.<sup>17</sup> His talents, learning, boldness as a controversialist, and skill as a writer, speedily made his publication exceedingly popular with those holding corresponding beliefs. Because of the wide circulation of *The Christian Baptist*, and its agreement with the tenets of the Little Pigeon Creek congregation, we can scarcely doubt that young Lincoln had an opportunity to read many, if not all, of its issues.



Others may be interested to learn, as I was, that, in the century which has passed since the Lincolns worshipped at the Little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church, that congregation has changed its doctrines but little. A recent letter from a resident friend reads, in part:

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to study concerning the early Indiana Baptists, and extended to him the resources of the Franklin College library. In that library, among other rare books, is a complete file of *The Christian Baptist*.

When the Lincolns lived in Indiana, the Regular Baptists were strongly Calvinistic. To a layman, that signifies that they believed in predestination — that God foreordained all things from the beginning, and man can do little, or nothing, to change the course of events. Many of Lincoln's associates have mentioned his lifelong tendency toward this belief.

<sup>17</sup> Spencer, I, 584-97.

Two extracts will illustrate the attitude Alexander Campbell displayed in many issues of his paper toward professional ministers and missionaries:

The scheme of a learned priesthood, chiefly composed of beneficiaries, has long since proved itself to be a grand device to keep men in ignorance and bondage.

It is evident that it is a capital mistake to suppose that missionaries in heathen lands, without the power of working miracles, can succeed in establishing the Christian Religion.

My wife was raised in the Regular Baptist faith, and her parents were members of the Little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church. Her oldest brother still retains his membership in a church of that faith, and I have heard much about their beliefs while visiting at his home. They still believe in Predestination, emphasize Foot Washing as paramount to the Lord's Supper; and do not believe in an Educated Ministry, Missions, the use of Musical Instruments at church services, or Sunday Schools. At the request of my brother-in-law, I attended services with him to hear his favorite preacher, a former "coal digger." This man talked for about an hour and a quarter. On the way home, I told my brother-in-law that his friend's talk was very good, but that he had started three sermons which he did not finish, and finished on one which he had never started. Generally, these good people give very interesting talks, are excellent Bible students, and cling tenaciously to Biblical statements as found in the text, with special emphasis upon their own doctrines.<sup>18</sup>

§ § §

In 1815, the Rappites, a German religious society, founded a village which they called "Harmonie" on the Indiana side of the Wabash River, about fifty miles above its mouth. They bought thirty thousand acres of land, and built a number of factories. German thrift and industry enabled them to prosper; but finding their markets too restricted, they decided to return to Pennsylvania.<sup>19</sup>

In 1825, Robert Owen—a prosperous and distinguished Scotch manufacturer, educator, and philanthropist—bought the Rappite holdings, for the purpose of demonstrating at New Harmony, as he renamed the place, the feasibility of a new social system which he called "The New Moral World." He secured the cooperation of William Maclure, a wealthy scientist and educator of Philadelphia. Maclure agreed to invest \$150,000 in the enterprise and take charge of its educational features.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Charles T. Baker, Editor of *The Monitor*, Grandview, Indiana.

<sup>19</sup> Lockwood, 7-36; Holliday, 207-14.

<sup>20</sup> Lockwood, 43-75; Holliday, 214-20.

Owen had already sponsored laws for the relief and education of the working classes in England. It is claimed that these were the first industrial measures for the relief of labor ever passed in the British Isles, and that they established a precedent for all similar legislation that has since been enacted in both England and America.<sup>21</sup>

On February 25 and March 7, 1825, Owen delivered addresses in the hall of the House of Representatives at Washington. He was listened to by both houses of Congress, the Supreme Court, the President, several members of the cabinet, and many other distinguished citizens.<sup>22</sup>

Owen and Maclure brought to New Harmony, from this country and Europe, the greatest coterie of scientists and educators that had yet been assembled in America; and they resolved to make that place "the center of American education." As a first step, they opened a library, the books for which were brought down the Ohio River on the famous "boat load of knowledge."<sup>23</sup>

On October 1, 1825, the first number of the *New Harmony Gazette* was issued. An eight-page paper of moderate size, it took for its motto: "If we cannot reconcile all opinions, let us endeavor to unite all hearts." It gave little local news, but contained many articles on historical, philosophic, scientific, and social subjects; with some poetry, letters, and selected clippings. Owen's educational, social, and political theories — principally, universal free education, women's rights, and the gradual emancipation

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<sup>21</sup> Lockwood, 43-58.

<sup>22</sup> Lockwood, 69.

<sup>23</sup> Lockwood, 73-81, 104-236; Holliday, 221-22; Tarbell, 151-52.

The "Library of the Workingmen's Institute," founded by William Maclure in 1838, is still functioning at New Harmony; and Miss Louise M. Husband, the present librarian, maintains all the Owen and Maclure traditions in the way of courtesy and helpfulness. Complete files of the *New Harmony Gazette*, 1825-1829, are available.

of slaves — were advocated.<sup>24</sup> New Harmony was only sixty miles from the Lincoln home; and we may be sure, I suppose, that “the enquiring and insatiable Lincoln” would not miss reading a single copy of the *New Harmony Gazette*.

He was not dependent, however, on the *Gazette* for information regarding Owen and his teachings. The *Terre Haute Register*, *Vincennes Western Sun*, *Evansville Gazette*, and *Louisville Public Advertiser* also circulated in his neighborhood and were available to him.<sup>25</sup>

William Jones, a native of Vincennes and a college graduate, opened a store only a short walk from the Lincoln home. His chief claim to fame is the large number of newspapers and magazines he received, and the regularity with which young Lincoln read them. Because a native of Vincennes, Jones certainly took the *Western Sun*. For that reason, and because its files are available, this paper has been selected as an example of the publicity given to Owen’s social experiment at New Harmony.<sup>26</sup> During the year 1825, alone, the *Western Sun* devoted approximately thirty columns to New Harmony, Owen, and his theories.

In later years, Dennis Hanks said that, for a time,

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<sup>24</sup> Many articles regarding the reforms which Robert Owen advocated can be found in various numbers of the *New Harmony Gazette*.

In the first and subsequent issues, there appeared the following advertisement:

NEW-HARMONY BOARDING SCHOOL

(Under the Superintendence of the Committee)

A limited number of Children whose parents are not members of the Society, will be received into this Institute, on application (if by letter, post paid) to the Committee.

*Terms.* — For Boarding, Lodging, Washing, Medicine, and instruction in the various branches taught in this Institute, one hundred dollars per annum, payable in advance.

<sup>25</sup> For information concerning the newspapers available to Lincoln in Indiana, we are indebted to Dr. Louis A. Warren and to Miss Caroline Dunn, Reference Librarian, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana.

<sup>26</sup> Captain Francis Marion Van Natter, Vincennes, Indiana, has spent several years doing intensive research regarding Lincoln and his Indiana associates. When his findings are available, we shall have a new and more-detailed picture of Lincoln in Indiana.



scarcely anything but Owen and his ideas were discussed in the Lincoln neighborhood; that Abraham longed to attend the school which had been established at New Harmony; and that he wistfully complained that there could be found in the library at New Harmony practically all of the information which he was then so anxious to acquire.<sup>27</sup>

That young Lincoln accepted two of Owen's principal theories — free education and a more nearly universal suffrage — is shown by his New Salem addresses to voters, issued soon after he left Indiana, in which he said, in part:

That every man may receive at least a moderate education . . . appears to be an object of vital importance . . .<sup>28</sup>

and

I go for admitting all whites to the rights of suffrage who pay taxes or bear arms (by no means excluding females);<sup>29</sup>

and that at a time, be it remembered, when there were no free schools; and women's suffrage was considered anathema by most of the current lords of creation.

It should not be forgotten, too, that until the exigencies of war changed the situation, Lincoln, like Owen, was always an Emancipationist rather than an Abolitionist.<sup>30</sup>

§   §   §

In his theological and religious teachings, Robert Owen was, for that day, extremely liberal. One writer has said that, judged by present standards, Owen was a Unitarian.<sup>31</sup> Generally, he has been called a Deist. One biographer says:

. . . his God was not the God of Pestalozzi and Froebel, but the God of Huxley — not a living, regenerating force in human hearts, touched by his quickening spirit, but a great creative force, which having endowed life with potential perfection,

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<sup>27</sup> Atkinson, 30-32; Vannest, 120-22.

<sup>28</sup> N. & H., (b), I, 3.

<sup>29</sup> N. & H., (b), I, 7.

<sup>30</sup> Beveridge, II, 20; N. & H., (b), I, 186-87, 202.

<sup>31</sup> Jones, I, 179.

has left it to be developed by the tender mercies of a chance environment.<sup>32</sup>

Lloyd Jones said of Owen:

He was not, nor did he ever pretend to be a judge of differences in religious dogma; but he believed it was the duty of men to dwell together in peace, and labor earnestly as brethren in an intelligent consciousness of their common requirements, for the reasonable satisfaction of their common wants, and in acknowledgment of their common duties. . . . Owen held that man's duty to the Creative Power called "God," is to be happy himself, to make his fellow beings happy, and endeavor to make the existence of all who are formed to feel pleasure and pain as delightful as his knowledge and power and their nature will admit.<sup>33</sup>

Early in 1828, Owen challenged orthodox religionists to a debate.<sup>34</sup> Alexander Campbell picked up the gauntlet thus thrown down. The next year, he and Owen held a discussion at Cincinnati which extended over fifteen days.<sup>35</sup> Their addresses were discussed in contemporary newspapers which young Lincoln read, and were later published in a book.

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<sup>32</sup> Jones, I, 181-82.

<sup>33</sup> Jones, I, 173, 181-82.

<sup>34</sup> *New Harmony Gazette*, January 28, 1828; *The Christian Baptist*, May 5, 1828. Owen's challenge to orthodox religionists read as follows:

I propose to prove that all the religions of the world have been founded on the ignorance of mankind; that they are directly opposed to the never-changing laws of our nature; that they have been, and are, the real source of vice, disunion, and misery of every description; that they are now the real bar to the formation of a society of virtue, of intelligence, of charity in its most extended sense, and of sincerity and kindness among the whole human family; and that they can no longer be maintained except through the ignorance of the mass of the people and the tyranny of the few over the mass.

It seems that Robert Owen's religious arguments did not convince his wife, for she remained a zealous church woman, and sometimes held religious services in the home.

<sup>35</sup> Mrs. Trollope, who was then visiting in this country, listened to the Owen-Campbell debate, marveled at the friendliness and courtesy the contestants displayed toward each other, and opined that such a contest would be neither practicable nor profitable in any other country.

What a profound impression Owen's religious teachings made on young Lincoln is suggested by all we know regarding Lincoln's attitude during his whole subsequent career; and there are those who believe that what Lloyd Jones said about Owen's religion could be applied with little change to that of Mr. Lincoln.



While Lincoln lived at New Salem, that town was surrounded by churches which represented several different denominations. Within a few miles, were one Disciple, two Regular Baptist, and three Cumberland Presbyterian congregations.<sup>36</sup>

The records of the George Spears family, at Clary's Grove, indicate that Lincoln occasionally spent the weekend at their home, and attended church services with them.<sup>37</sup> This was doubtless a custom which he followed with other friends in various communities, both while living at New Salem and, later, when traveling over the circuit.



There were then living at New Salem a group of militant non-conformists who were in more or less agreement with Robert Owen on theological and religious subjects. They read with approval, and passed along to potential converts, the works of several Deistic writers. From these friends, Lincoln obtained Paine's *Age of Reason*, Volney's

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<sup>36</sup> Cronkhite; Thomas, 34-36.

The attainments of most of the ministers at New Salem, and the character of their discourses, seem to have differed little from those of the preachers to whom Lincoln had listened in Indiana. Probably the leader at New Salem, in both character and attainments, was the Reverend John M. Berry. He was the father of William Berry, Lincoln's friend and his partner in an ill-fated merchandizing adventure. When William died as a result of dissipation, the Reverend Berry said at his grave, in substance: "If all we have believed and taught is true, my son is now enduring the torments of hell." This incident gained for Berry the title of "Old Roman," but what effect it had on the tender-hearted Lincoln is conjectural.

<sup>37</sup> Cronkhite.

*Ruin of Empires*, and Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.<sup>38</sup>

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Thomas Paine (1737-1809) is believed by many to have been the foremost pamphleteer of the eighteenth century. He wrote with an earnestness that was convincing, and in language that the masses could understand. He was a coin-er of phrases which intrigued the imagination of men, and lodged in their memories; for example, "these are the times that try men's souls." He renounced all copyrights and profits, so his essays were printed in cheap editions, and sold in great numbers.<sup>39</sup>

A writer of today who said the same things about the Bible that Paine did then, in his *Age of Reason*, would probably be called nothing more severe than "Higher Critic." In a confession of faith, Paine said:

I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life.<sup>40</sup>

That he was a radical dissentient, however, is shown by his negative creed, which reads, in part:

I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman Church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of.<sup>41</sup>

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Constantine de Volney (1757-1820) was a French traveler, writer, politician, philosopher, and skeptic. Perhaps the underlying thought of his *Ruins* is disclosed in an extract from a letter which he wrote to Dr. Priestly in answer to a published criticism:

[Because] among the different Christian sects, among the

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<sup>38</sup> Angle, 93, 102, 355; Thomas, 35; Beveridge, I, 135-39.

<sup>39</sup> Warner, XXVIII, 10, 975, 78.

<sup>40</sup> Paine, 5.

<sup>41</sup> Paine, 6.



Mohometans, and even among those people who were of no sect, I have found men who practice all the virtues, public and private, and that too without affectation; while others, who were incessantly declaiming of God and Religion, abandoned themselves to every vicious habit which their belief condemned, I thereby became convinced that Ethics, the doctrines of morality, are the only essential, as they are the only demonstrable part of religion.<sup>42</sup>

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Gibbon's *Rome* has been considered by many scholars to be one of the greatest historical works ever published.<sup>43</sup> Edward Gibbon (1737-1794), the author, was incredulous and skeptical, with little of the spiritual craving and enthusiasm which lead one to religious associations. In the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of his work, he treated the early Christians so factually, not to say unsympathetically, that these chapters were later reprinted by a Free Thought society under the title, *History of Christianity*.<sup>44</sup>

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At Vandalia, after his election to the General Assembly of the State, and later at Springfield, Mr. Lincoln met some clergymen of a distinctly different type from those

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<sup>42</sup> Volney, 219; N. & H., (b), I, 63.

How thoroughly for a time Lincoln became imbued with both Volney's thought and style is patent to any one who reads Lincoln's Washingtonian Temperance Address, delivered at Springfield on February 22, 1842. The ideas Lincoln then advanced, as will be remembered, were so liberal that some of his church-going friends became offended. Volney begins the "Invocation" to his *Ruins* by saying: "Hail solitary ruins, holy sepulchers and silent wall! you I invoke; to you I address my prayer." In Lincoln's address, we find: "Glorious consummation! Hail, fall of fury! Reign of reason, all hail!" This grandiloquent style was not used habitually by Lincoln, so it was probably borrowed from Volney especially for this occasion.

<sup>43</sup> Warner, XVI, 6, 271.

<sup>44</sup> Near the end of the sixteenth chapter of his *Rome*, Gibbon says:

We shall conclude this chapter by a melancholy truth, which obtrudes itself on the reluctant mind; that even admitting, without hesitation or inquiry, all that history has recorded, or devotion has feigned, on the subject of martyrdoms, it must still be acknowledged that the Christians, in the course of their intestine dissensions, have inflicted far greater severities on each other than they had experienced from the zeal of infidels.

to whom he had been accustomed in the backwoods. He met preachers who possessed — in various combinations — erudition, eloquence, idealism, practicality, piety, and circumspect zeal. Of this class, probably the Reverend John Mason Peck was the most distinguished representative.

Peck was a native of Connecticut, with only moderate opportunities to secure a formal education. His mind, however, was ravenous in so many departments of human knowledge, and he studied to such good purpose, that before his death, in 1858, Governor Reynolds believed him to be "the most learned and best informed man in the valley of the Mississippi."<sup>45</sup> It is said that Peck "wrote with marvelous facility and spoke with ease, volubility, and accuracy of statement."<sup>46</sup> He was the friend and confident of every Governor of Illinois who served during his lifetime.<sup>47</sup> He edited the first Baptist paper published in the West, and wrote a number of books which were widely read.<sup>48</sup> He established at Rock Spring, Illinois, a seminary that was later moved to Alton and became Shurtleff College.<sup>49</sup> Harvard conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.<sup>50</sup>

How much Lincoln esteemed Peck, and desired his political support, is indicated by the fact that, so far as the

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<sup>45</sup> Hayne, 120.

<sup>46</sup> Humphrey, 156.

<sup>47</sup> Humphrey, 154.

<sup>48</sup> Hayne, 126-127; Humphrey, 146, 155-56.

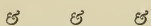
<sup>49</sup> Humphrey, 151-54; Hayne, 114, 120.

<sup>50</sup> Humphrey, 145-63.

In 1817, while still a young man, John Mason Peck was sent west by the Baptist Foreign Missionary Society, and, for the next few years, traveled from Wisconsin on the north to New Orleans on the south. Being instrumental in the establishment of the Baptist Home Missionary Society, he was given the title, "Father of Home Missions." About this time, he removed to Rock Spring, in Illinois, not far from St. Louis, and afterwards lived and labored mostly in that commonwealth.

In addition to his constant preaching, he established and edited *The Pioneer*, the first Baptist paper in the West. He wrote a *Guide for Emigrants*, a *Gazetteer of Illinois*, a *Life of John Clark*, a *Life of Daniel Boone*, and *The Traveler's Directory*, besides editing *Annals of the West*.

records show, Peck was the only man, with the exception of Herndon, to whom Lincoln ever wrote a letter in defense of his course in Congress regarding the Mexican War.<sup>51</sup>



After his removal to Springfield and his marriage to Mary Todd, some of Mr. Lincoln's closest social and professional friends were members of various churches. John T. Stuart, his first partner and legal mentor, eventually became an officer in the First Presbyterian Church; Stephen T. Logan, his next, for many years, attended, but did not join, the Disciple Church, and he was its largest contributor; Ninian W. Edwards, Lincoln's brother-in-law, affiliated with the Episcopal Church; Edward D. Baker, for whom Lincoln named one of his sons, was at one time an ardent member of the Disciple Church, even thought of entering the ministry, but, it is said, "gradually slipped the anchor of his faith and was no longer seen in his accustomed place in the house of devotion." B. S. Edwards, James C. Conkling, and Newton Bateman, were members of the Second Presbyterian Church. William H. Herndon called himself an infidel, but he was probably, in his beliefs, a Universalist or Unitarian — in need of orientation — perhaps a Naturalist, or a belligerent and somewhat excitable Deist. Several of Lincoln's fellow lawyers at Springfield sometimes preached the Gospel.<sup>52</sup>

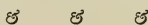
<sup>51</sup> N. & H., (b), I, 120-22; Beveridge, I, 432.

<sup>52</sup> Between 1840 and 1850, before the coming of railroads made it possible for Mr. Lincoln to return to his home for the week-ends, when he was out on the circuit, he was accustomed to spending Sundays at "what passed for hotels" at the various county seats of the Eighth Circuit. At that time, in those villages and towns, there was an aggregate of approximately fifty church congregations; largely Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Disciple. Anyone cognizant of the customs of that day will realize how often he heard the inquiry: "Won't you meet us at church services tomorrow, and go home with us for dinner?" He was too good a politician to refuse such invitations, and his visions of fried chicken, and the other company fixin's, with which pioneers regaled their Sunday guests would have been determinative anyway. Preachers, even then, were not unique in their gustatory preferences.

To Dr. Harry E. Pratt and Paul M. Angle, the writer is indebted for access to

The influence of his religionist friends, a wish to check his beliefs with the best orthodox doctrines of that day, personal doubts and yearning, or some other reason, caused Mr. Lincoln, at this period, to read a large number of standard works on Christianity; among others, Baxter's *Saints' Rest*, Butler's *Analogy of Religion*, Paley's *Works*, Hitchcock's *Religious Truths*, and Smith's *Christians' Defense*. At the suggestion of Jesse W. Fell and William H. Herndon, he read the sermons and other writings of Dr. William E. Channing and the Reverend Theodore Parker.<sup>53</sup>

At this time, too, he read two editions of Chamber's *Vestiges of Creation*; and Herndon claimed that Lincoln accepted its theories.<sup>54</sup> It taught that creation comes through natural development rather than through a special fiat of the Creator, as recorded in Genesis; and it thereby paved the way for Darwin's *Origin of Species*.



Up to the time he went to Washington, Mr. Lincoln's relations with preachers and other religionists were sometimes not entirely fortunate.

The only time he was ever defeated in a contest before the voters, his closest winning-opponent was the Reverend Peter Cartwright. In their later contest for election to the National House of Representatives, Cartwright's principal accusation against Lincoln was that he was a Deist and too lacking in faith to make an acceptable representative for that electorate.<sup>55</sup> This was an incident, by the way, in which Cartwright afterwards took so little pride that he made no mention of it in his autobiography.

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many county histories, biographies, church histories, church records, and special articles, all containing information about the religious affiliations of Lincoln's Springfield and circuit friends.

<sup>53</sup> Warren in "Lincoln Lore," No. 167; Barton, 162-87, 288-89; Angle, 359; Remsburg, 115.

<sup>54</sup> Angle, 353-54; Barton, 166-71.

<sup>55</sup> Beveridge, I, 383; Rankin, 321-27; *The Abraham Lincoln Quarterly*, March, 1942.



When Lincoln was defeated before a congressional convention, in 1843, by Edward D. Baker, he said in a letter to a friend:

There was, too, the strangest combination of church influence against me. Baker is a Campbellite; and therefore, as I suppose, with few exceptions got all of that church. . . . It was everywhere contended that no Christian ought to go for me because I belonged to no church, was suspected of being a Deist, and had talked about fighting a duel.<sup>56</sup>

The influential Reverend John Mason Peck opposed Lincoln's Mexican War policy with voice and pen, and he was probably an important factor in Lincoln's subsequent political eclipse.<sup>57</sup>

According to Herndon, in the Presidential campaign of 1860, a poll of the voters of Springfield disclosed that only three out of twenty-three ministers there intended to vote for Mr. Lincoln. At that time, candidates suspected of leaning toward the Abolitionists were not politically popular at Springfield; and it is believed, too, that an uncomplimentary remark made by Lincoln — and repeated at the next meeting of the ministerial association — about an evangelist then preaching there had disturbed and offended the local clergy.<sup>58</sup>

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By that time, the astute Lincoln must have realized that dissident frankness on subjects in which men's hearts and hopes are engaged, is a serious liability, both to an individual and to the cause which he represents. And that may be the reason, as I suppose, why, thereafter, beginning with the farewell address at Springfield, Lincoln seems to have made almost an ostentatious display of his belief and trust in an Overruling Providence whose immutable laws we

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<sup>56</sup> N. & H., (b), I, 80.

<sup>57</sup> Beveridge, I, 432.

<sup>58</sup> Angle, 377; Barton, 114-27; Curtis, 387; Remsburg, 20-23, 39-50.

should strive to apprehend and observe; and, also, why he was ever afterwards meticulously careful to say nothing that would be offensive to the most orthodox of churchmen. In not a single instance of which I know, did Mr. Lincoln ever pretend to hold religious tenets which he could not accept without mental reservations; but it must be admitted, apparently, that he sometimes did emphasize his accord with orthodox churchmen regarding the doctrines which they held in common.



At Washington, Mr. Lincoln attended services with his wife at a Presbyterian church, as he had done at Springfield.

There seems to be no evidence that his association with the cabinet and other statesmen at Washington affected his theological beliefs. The literary influence of Seward and his *Book of Common Prayer* is plainly seen in many of the Presidential proclamations which that secretary wrote and Lincoln signed; but Lincoln's only reference to Seward's religious proclivities was regarding the similarity of Seward's technique in swearing to that of a "mule skinner" in the military camp across the river; which might indicate that the President did not take his secretary's piety very seriously. Chase suggested the reference to Almighty God in the Emancipation Proclamation. Stanton's public declaration that "only God can organize victory" may, or may not, have encouraged Lincoln to make public acknowledgment of his belief and trust in a Divine Providence.

The two ministers with whom Mr. Lincoln was most intimate at Washington were the Reverend Phineas D. Gurley and Bishop Matthew Simpson. The former was pastor of the church which the Lincolns attended; the latter, "the most eminent Methodist divine of that period." In their funeral orations at Washington and Springfield,

neither claimed to know of any change in Lincoln's theological convictions during his residence at the capital. Bishop Simpson said:

As to his religious experiences, I cannot speak definitely, because I was not privileged to know his private sentiments.<sup>59</sup>

Both, however, had been impressed by Lincoln's firm belief in the ultimate triumph of right, and by his faith and trust in a Supreme Ruler.<sup>60</sup>

If Lincoln's associations at Washington materially changed his theological convictions, such a change was unknown to his wife and private secretaries.<sup>61</sup> Nicolay and Hay later dismissed some rather startling accounts of Presidential confessions of faith, and conversations, by attributing them to the wishful thinking of the reporters, and to an overwhelming desire on the part of those reporters to prove an unusual intimacy with a martyred Chief Executive who was already being apotheosized.<sup>62</sup>

That the loss of his son, and the heart-breaking struggles and disappointments of the war, softened Lincoln's spirit, perhaps promoted desire for a more simple faith, is suggested by an incident which was told by Joshua F. Speed, probably the most intimate friend that Lincoln ever had. Arriving at the Soldiers' Home for a visit, Speed found the President reading his Bible. In the conversation

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<sup>59</sup> *Lincoln Memorial*, 236.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 120-27, 229-39; Remsburg, 30-31, 37-38.

<sup>61</sup> Barton, 229-30; N. & H., (a), VI, 339-42; Remsburg, 184; Angle, 359-60.

<sup>62</sup> N. & H., (a), VI, 339; Barton, 382; Warren, 146-49.

Many incidents have indicated that some pretty good men who wish to bask in reflected glory occasionally remember things which, as Paul Angle says, "might have happened but probably didn't." Dr. Louis A. Warren's classic example seems to be the case of Austin Gollaher. When Herndon went to Kentucky in 1865 seeking Lincoln data, Gollaher could remember through the mists of fifty years just one incident connected with his early association with young Lincoln — his rescue of the boy from the waters of Knob Creek. Many years later, however, according to Gore's, *Boyhood of Lincoln*, Gollaher could then recall 316 pages of Lincoln incidents. And that book was accepted by a number of biographers, notably Stephenson, as veritable history.

which followed, Speed disclosed that he had lost some of the skepticism of his earlier years; and Lincoln said:

You are wrong, Speed; take all of this Book upon reason that you can, and the balance on faith, and you will live and die a better man.<sup>63</sup>

When Mr. Lincoln said to Representative Deming that he would gladly join any church that had no complicated creed, and whose only requirement was love for God and man, he probably indicated that he longed for association with others whose religious and theological convictions were similar to his own.<sup>64</sup>

That the Reverend Lyman Abbott, in 1906 — after reviewing all the testimony then extant — was convinced that the agonies of war tempered Lincoln's spirit without affecting his theological opinions, is indicated by his writing:

There is no evidence that Mr. Lincoln . . . had either wrought out a system of theology for himself or accepted any that had been wrought out by others; but there is abundant evidence . . . that . . . in the four years of tragedy . . . there had been born in him faith in a supreme righteous power, whose will we may help to carry out, and on whose wisdom and strength we may rely in achieving it.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Speed, 32-33; Barton, 92-93.

<sup>64</sup> Deming, 42; Barton, 244-45.

Representative Deming quoted Lincoln as saying:

I have never united myself to any church, because I have found difficulty in giving my assent, without mental reservation, to the long, complicated statements of Christian doctrine which characterize their articles of belief and confessions of faith. When any church will inscribe over its altars, as its sole qualification for membership, the Saviour's condensed statement of the substance of both law and gospel, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself," that church will I join with all my heart and all my soul.

<sup>65</sup> *The Outlook*, November 17, 1906; Barton, 231.

From the standpoint of an orthodox churchman, Barton's *Soul of Abraham Lincoln* will probably remain for a long while, possibly always, the best book on Lincoln's faith. To a Freethinker, Remsburg's essay on Lincoln in his *Six Historic Amer-*



From the evidence herein adduced — and I have been unable to find good evidence that is contravening — it appears that the crude backwoods theology of Lincoln's childhood, and its illiterate sponsors, were unacceptable to him; that, in his youth, he did accept the Deistic religious philosophy of Robert Owen, and at New Salem found confirmation of the Owen theories in the writings of Paine, Volney, and Gibbon; that, in later years, perhaps while seeking a more-orthodox faith which his reason could accept, he read a large number of works by Christian theologians; that, during the war, he made a special effort to show his appreciation of the support given to the government by Northern churches; and that the strain of war softened his spirit without altering his convictions.

There seems to be no good reason for believing that he was ever an Atheist, or that he ever became an orthodox Christian; but there appears to be every reason for believing that, to the end of his days, he remained a philosophic Theist who appreciated the wisdom and literary charm to be found in the Bible, valued to the utmost its moral precepts, and longed for fellowship with those holding a religious philosophy similar to his own. We might regret that he did not then — as he could so easily today — establish intimate relations with distinguished churchmen whose religious convictions approximated his own; for I believe that he would have thoroughly enjoyed communion and fellowship with an Emerson, a Gunsaulus, or a Fosdick.

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*icans* will seem the fairest and most comprehensive work. To one who believes, or wishes to believe, that Lincoln eventually became an orthodox Christian in all but profession, H. H. Horner, *Evolution of Lincoln's Faith* will afford much satisfaction.

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## INTELLECTUAL NEW SALEM IN LINCOLN'S DAY

FERN NANCE POND \*

The settlers living in the Illinois country one hundred years ago constituted the third wave of migration. They were first preceded by the hunters and trappers — those restless adventurers who constantly sought new horizons. Then came the squatters, staying for a season and moving on in search of a better land. The people who arrived in the 1830s were more substantial and dependable. They were land-minded and home-hungry; so they secured farms, felled trees, built sturdy log cabins, broke the prairie sod, and bridged streams. At the same time, they developed the moral, religious, and educational background which is essential to the founding of a great state.

The village of New Salem, Illinois, was settled by a remarkable group of men and women. It is true that some of them could neither read nor write; but there were others of intellect and training, and they impressed their culture upon the community.

The New Salem pioneers brought with them two attitudes toward life, two types of thought. From bleak New England, came shrewd men accustomed to strict habits, indoctrinated with the severe religious views of Jonathan Edwards, and with that sound foresight in business which makes the Yankee successful. Another group came from

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\* Fern Nance Pond, Petersburg, Illinois, New Salem Historian, and compiler of the Illinois State Catalogue, *New Salem, a Memorial to Abraham Lincoln*.

Virginia, and these southern folk realized the romance of living; were men of high honor and adventure; men of courage, who readily staked their fortunes in a new frontier; and they brought with them a more liberal philosophy. When these two groups met and mingled in the village, their contact was mutually advantageous, because each had something that the other needed.

Great were the benefits Abraham Lincoln received from these two groups during the six years in the little village while he studied and absorbed their respective philosophies.

All the persons and movements which contributed to the intellectual life of the New Salem community cannot be mentioned in so brief a paper. We shall not dwell on the much-discussed schoolmaster, Mentor Graham, although we grant him his place; nor the unique niche of Abraham Lincoln; nor shall we, at this time, touch upon the religious life of the period. Each of these is worthy of a special study. We shall try to consider only a few special agencies; some, because their importance entitles them to be weighed; others, because their story is comparatively new, inasmuch as writers generally have not given them consideration.

The author of a recent book said that there was a "budding intellectuality at New Salem." That is true; and more than that is true. There is much evidence that many of these pioneers had keen minds; had enjoyed some educational advantages, and, to their credit, created others, and that they were able to converse on subjects requiring thought.

In the 1830s, four young men of the New Salem community attended Illinois College at Jacksonville; at least one young woman, Ann Rutledge, was preparing to study at the Jacksonville Female Academy; and this, be it remembered, at a time when attendance at schools of higher learning was not common.

The four young men were William F. Berry; David H. Rutledge; William G. Greene; and his brother Lynn McNulty Greene. All excepting the last had served in Abraham Lincoln's company in the Black Hawk War, returning to New Salem in the summer of 1832. That these four youths sought admission on College Hill at Jacksonville indicates the high regard for advanced learning that was held by their parents, some of whom had themselves enjoyed academic training.

A college where they met other young men from thirteen or more states, opened up to them a new world. Their expenses for a year ranged from \$85 to \$100. Each was required to furnish his own table, chair, washbowl and pitcher, andirons, shovel, tongs, bed and bedding. The industrial department enabled those of slender means to earn money by making furniture of various kinds; and they were allotted plots of ground, where they could sow and reap crops. How these lads must have been startled by the strange curriculum of that college, the fundamentals of which consisted of Greek, Latin, and Higher Mathematics!

It seems likely that such educational opportunities would appeal to Abraham Lincoln, too; and we have a right to wonder if he ever considered going to college with his friends. We do not know.

We find comments on the Jacksonville school by Charles James Fox Clarke in a letter written by him at New Salem, in August, 1834, to his mother at Northwood, New Hampshire.

Let us remember that young Clarke had attended Pembroke Academy in New Hampshire, and was there on that eventful day in 1825 when General Lafayette visited the school; that the notebooks which he used at the academy — all written in his neat and beautiful hand — are yet preserved, and show that he had thoroughly mastered ge-

ometry, surveying, trigonometry, and kindred subjects; and that he had been a school teacher.

He thus comments to his mother:

Jacksonville College is doing more for this country than any eastern man could expect. It was established by eastern people mostly from New England. Old Doc. Beecher's son is president. Mr. Greene, the man we board with has two sons there. They almost astonish the old folks with their learning when they come home.

William F. Berry, one of the boys from New Salem who attended Illinois College, was a son of the Reverend John M. Berry, a Cumberland Presbyterian minister and a veteran of the War of 1812. The elder Berry entered land and settled at Rock Creek, adjacent to New Salem, in 1822. He established a number of churches, held many camp meetings, and attained some distinction by publishing a book, *The Covenants and the Right to Church Membership*. The Reverend Berry so impressed himself upon the community that T. G. Onstot later referred to him as "the noblest Roman of them all." He was pleased when his son engaged in a transitory partnership with Abraham Lincoln in a store, after their return from the Black Hawk War. It was natural that such a man would encourage his son to seek some collegiate training. All too soon, young Berry earned the reputation of being a hard drinker; and he died in January, 1835.

David H. Rutledge, the studious son of the tavern keeper, attended Illinois College for three years. The college records do not mention his presence there, but we can support the statement with proof from three reliable sources.

On February 23, 1833, one William Webb sent his signed request, addressed to "David Rutledge, College Hill, Jacksonville, Morgan County, Ill.," asking Rutledge to pay Webb five dollars then "due and owing."

There is extant also, a statement of account with the



college, dated July 9, 1834, and receipted by Joel Catlin, fiscal agent of the school, which shows Rutledge's financial standing with the institution, and reveals that he had employment in the industrial department.

In the archives of Illinois College is the now-famous letter, dated July 27, 1835, and written by David Rutledge to his father, James M. Rutledge, with a note to James Kittridge, and a postscript to his sister Ann which said, "I am glad to hear that you have a notion of coming to school."

After leaving college, David studied law at Lewiston, Illinois, in the office of Lewis W. Ross, who with his brother, Harvey Ross, also attended Illinois College. Rutledge was licensed to practice law on September 18, 1839, by Supreme Court Justices Samuel D. Lockwood and Thomas C. Browne. He soon secured a lucrative practice at Petersburg. He was active in the religious and cultural circles of the town, and was prominent in organizing and maintaining the Petersburg Lyceum; and most of its records are in his handwriting.

A promising career was ended when he passed from life at the age of twenty-seven. He was laid by the side of his sister, Ann, in the Concord Settlement Cemetery, also known as the Goodpasture Cemetery.

William G. Greene, born in 1812, became a student in the preparatory department of Illinois College in 1834, and continued his studies for three years. He left home in a homespun suit of clothes, and with twenty dollars in his pocket. He secured work in the industrial department of the school, receiving eight to ten cents an hour for his labor. He worked every hour of the day not devoted to his recitations. That made it necessary for him to study far into the nights. He even prepared his own food — at a cost of thirty-five cents a week. Because of his unflinching energy, he became a favorite with President Edward

Beecher. By the time he left college, he had acquired two suits of store clothes, and sixty dollars in cash; and he had also entered 160 acres of land. Later he went to Kentucky, became a private tutor, taught grammar schools, and delivered lectures. For a time, he was the principal of Priestly Academy at Sparta, Tennessee. Manifestly, he was well qualified to teach Abraham Lincoln grammar, as the President once detailed to Secretary Seward; and when Mr. Lincoln appointed Greene, Collector of Internal Revenue at Peoria, Illinois, he knew that Greene was fully qualified to fill that position.

While Greene was teaching in the Academy at Sparta, he courted one of his students, 17-year-old Louisa H. White, whom he married March 31, 1837. Louisa H. White was the granddaughter of John S. White, a captain in the Revolutionary War, and a Tennessee pioneer for whom White County was named. The log house in which she was born stands today at Sparta covered with weatherboarding.

After Greene's marriage he continued teaching for a time, later he became deputy sheriff, and after that on a capital of one hundred dollars, went into the grocery business in Memphis. In this business he prospered and invested in real estate.

In the 1840s he moved with his family to Illinois, near the deserted site of New Salem, where he lived a long and useful life, amassed a considerable fortune, and continued to be known as one of Abraham Lincoln's closest friends.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Louisa White Greene's love of the south was true and beautiful. Yet with a brave spirit she left her Tennessee home and went to the prairie state with her husband and family. During the Civil War she suffered the experience common to many: In the homeland her brothers served in the Confederate Army, while she gave three of her sons to the Union Army. In the 1870s, this one time Tennessee girl, born in a log cabin, traveled abroad for three years with her young daughter Katherine Yates Greene.

Be it remembered too, that Tennessee contributed other citizens to the New Salem community. Jack Armstrong was born in that state in 1804; James M. Rutledge,



Lynn McNulty Greene enrolled as a freshman at Illinois College in the fall of 1834. He continued as a student through his junior year, but did not graduate. David Rutledge, writing to his father, James M. Rutledge, from College Hill, on July 27, 1835, said:

L. M. Greene is up home at this time trying to get a school. I had concluded to quit this place and go to him until the commencement of next term, but I could not get off without paying for the whole term, therefore concluded to stay here.

L. M. Greene went home to teach school during vacations, and was an active member of the neighborhood literary society. Later, he was admitted to the bar, and became a successful lawyer.

That these four young men of New Salem left their homes with scant means to attend college is proof that their elders had implanted in them a desire for greater intellectual development than their home environment afforded; and that was a day when in most communities, able-bodied boys were principally valued on a farm as labor assets along with the horses and the oxen. Their going reveals on the part of their parents an intelligent evaluation of life; and it indicates that the parents were willing to make loving sacrifices in order that their sons might better equip themselves to live in their day and generation.

We shall not limit ourselves solely to the confines of the village when presenting the true intellectual influences upon life at New Salem. To do so would be to exclude men who lived nearby, men who constantly associated with the residents of the village, and who contributed to the general trend of thought in both the town and community.

At Farmer's Point, south of the village and adjacent

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tavern keeper and father of Ann, resided in Tennessee for a time, as did also Bowling Green, New Salem justice of the peace, and John M. Cameron, co-founder of the town.

thereto, lived Thomas Jefferson Nance. He has been unknown to Lincoln historians because the mass of documents and papers collected by the family from the 1820s through the Civil War period, and now in my possession, has not heretofore been available. What is disclosed by these documents and papers, supported by neighborhood traditions, leads us to believe that Thomas Nance's contribution to education in the New Salem community was of commanding importance.

Zachariah Nance, his father, was a Virginian who served in the Revolutionary War, and was with General "Mad Anthony" Wayne at the storming of Stony Point. About 1806, he migrated to Kentucky, and his son Thomas J. Nance was born there in 1811. In Kentucky, the Nance family lived neighbors with Nathe Owens, whose daughter, Elizabeth, married Bennett Abel, and lived at New Salem, where, in the course of time, her sister Mary Owens visited her, and formed a friendship with Abraham Lincoln.

Nathe Owens maintained a private school at his pretentious plantation-home; and to this school, came professors from Transylvania University to give instruction to his children. (On a recent trip to Kentucky it was my pleasure to stand in the very room where the school was held.) On invitation, Thomas J. Nance; his brother, Allen Q. Nance; and his sister, Parthena, later wife of Samuel Hill of New Salem, became students at the Owens school.

In Kentucky, Thomas J. Nance belonged to a literary society, before which he made speeches on various subjects. They include a speech on temperance, a Fourth of July oration, and a eulogy on George Washington.

Shortly before Nance went to Illinois, Professor James McElroy, Superior of "Rural Academy," as the Owens school was called, certified that Thomas had studied and was qualified to teach the following subjects: spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar (he owned a Kirk-

ham), geography, definition and composition; history, ancient and modern, rhetoric, logic, philosophy, natural and moral, rudiments of astronomy with the use of globes, geometry and chemistry.

When Zachariah Nance and his family were leaving their old Kentucky home for Illinois, Nathe Owens surprised them by handing this tender tribute to his old friend and neighbor:

Mr. Zachariah Nance and his wife have been near neighbors to me for twenty-six years. They have been respectable, good neighbors. I regret that I must part with them. Their children now go with them, towit, Thomas, Allen and Parthena, who were born in the house they now go from. They have constantly associated with my children. They are worthy youths and have my best wishes for their prosperity. Mr. Thomas Nance has approached manhood and has been doing business for his father the last 12 months. He has been upright in his conduct and pleasing to all. I do believe that young Mr. Nance possesses the principles that constitute the gentleman. Not one of the family know of my intention of giving this certificate nor will they know it until I hand it to them. I write for my satisfaction and to stimulate them to remember their old neighbor.

Greene Co., Ky., Sept. 28, 1832.

NATHE OWENS.

The Nance caravan arrived in the New Salem community in October, 1832, a little more than a year after Abraham Lincoln appeared there. The father entered land, and settled at Farmer's Point, about two miles south of the village.

In less than two months after their arrival, young Thomas was considering his own employment and the educational needs of the neighborhood. On December 17, 1832, he organized his first subscription school, agreeing to teach for a period of six months any of the subjects which he had studied in Kentucky. The following June, he began his second term, with the Houghtons, Combses,

Greenes, Washington Hornbuckle, Solomon Houser, and others as subscribers. He later opened a third term, and one of the subscribers was Jefferson Houser.

The two last-mentioned names have special meaning in that Solomon Houser was the grandfather, and Jefferson Houser the great-uncle, of Dr. M. L. Houser, of Peoria, Illinois. The records show that Solomon Houser purchased land near New Salem in 1833, carried on his trading there, and participated in the social activities of the community. It is but natural that his grandson should be interested in preserving the New Salem history of that day.

A diligent search has failed to uncover specimens of student work during the Nance school-teaching period. However, we have found two short essays that were written a few years later in the same community by his fourteen year old daughter.

### FASHIONS

Fashions is the most foolish thing that ever was followed. That is some fashions are very unreasonable, and again there is some that are not, for instance there is the fashion of tight lacing, that is a very unreasonable fashion; how many of the female race have been sent to their eternal homes. How many mothers have wept over the graves of their young daughters who have been taken away from them by death on the account of lacing. The reason it is so very unreasonable is in the first place they do not feel so well, and another it cramps their lungs and they have no room to grow or expand, and they soon are carried off by the consumption.

ELIZABETH NANCE.

### WHISKERS

Of all the fashions that ever was followed the fashion of war-ing whiskers is the most disgusting. I do not mean to say that they are so very disgusting with every person, they look very well when they are worn right, but to see them all over a person's face (like our teacher's) it makes them look like some great animal. And there is another way they look fully as bad, that



is the fashion of waring gotees, to see any man spoil his good looks by waring them it looks like they wanted to be noticed, and, then to see every boy that can shave twice stepping around waring a mustach or gotee looks very badly also.

E. H. NANCE.

In January, 1833, Thomas Nance launched his first literary society at Farmer's Point and Rock Creek, and gave it the high-sounding name of "The Tyro Polemic and Literary Club." At its first meeting, he was elected its president; and he made the following inaugural address:

Whatever be your intentions and future expectations, it is your indispensable duty, if you have any desire to gain the respect of your acquaintances and qualify yourself for the busy scenes of the world, to be studious in your conduct, and thoughtful about your mental improvement.

Remember that this is the morning of life in which pursuit is ardent and obstacles readily give way to vigor and perseverance. It is in your power to convert this season of learning into a source of satisfaction if you will but employ your time in continuous and useful reflections. While we thus employ our time we should carefully avoid those frivolous and uninstrusive amusements which ruin and debase the mind of many an inconsiderate youth. The principal difference between man and man is chiefly owing to the cultivation of the mind. Anticipating the pleasures that are to be derived from an educated mind, may each of you pursue the path that leads to honor, usefulness and true enjoyment.

Altogether Nance organized four literary societies in this neighborhood in the 1830s, one of which continued until 1879. The discussions in such meetings must have been intensely interesting to a mind stimulated by reading newspapers from Springfield, Louisville, Cincinnati, Baltimore and Philadelphia, besides his many books, some of which are now on the book shelves of the New Salem cabins.

Nance later served in the General Assembly of the State

of Illinois, and his letters written from Springfield to his wife contain interesting comments about his colleagues — Lincoln, Baker, Ficklin, Hardin, and others.

There had been a literary society functioning at New Salem since James Rutledge had organized it at his tavern in 1831. There the members met and eagerly engaged in argument and literary criticism. Rutledge owned about twenty-five books, and these were available to those seeking knowledge. The lore of travelers, coming in by stage coach, also influenced the cultural atmosphere of the tavern.

We do not have the records of the New Salem Literary Society; but we do have the minutes of several contemporary societies, one at Petersburg and those established nearby by Nance. From all these, we may gain a fairly accurate concept of the New Salem group.

The members subscribed to a Constitution and By-laws, and held meetings once a month. One outstanding rule was that no member should use the name of the Supreme Being in debate. Any member failing to give attention to the speeches was fined from three to six and one-fourth cents; and any one guilty of disorderly conduct was fined from one to six candles. Every member was required to perform in all the several departments, — debating, declaiming, composing, criticising, and lecturing. Some of the standing committees were: Commerce, Agriculture, Military Affairs, Navy, Morals, and Education. The purpose of the last committee was to "establish a library and a high school, and to report upon the current systems of quackery."

On three occasions, as shown by the records, the question of slavery was ardently debated. One popular subject was the straightening and clearing of the Sangamon River, and another, the building of a canal from Petersburg to Beardstown. Those pioneers had a sense of humor, too, as one meeting was devoted to a discussion of the question,



"Shall bachelors be taxed for the support of old maids?" With appropriate levity, this question was referred to the Committee on Agriculture. The members seemed equally interested in the questions: should females be educated and have the right to vote?; should banks be abolished?; should people join temperance societies?; is it right to treat during political campaigns?; should a wife promise to obey her husband?; should Congress reduce the price of public lands?; should the Mormons be exterminated?; and which is the greatest evil, slavery, anger, laziness, ignorance, aristocracy, love of money, falsehood, or intemperance? Minutes of one meeting show that the members "warmly discussed" this problem: "If a man were crossing a river with his mother and his intended bride, and an accident happens to the boat so that he must throw one or the other out, by which act will he bespeak the most prudence?"

Dr. Francis Regnier gave addresses at various times and places on astronomy, politics, and philosophy.

Jack Armstrong, Bowling Green, Dr. Francis Regnier, David H. Rutledge, Dr. John Allen, Samuel Hill, Isaac Onstott, L. M. Greene, William G. Greene, Thomas J. Nance, and Jack Kelso belonged to one or more of the neighboring literary societies. Probably most of them belonged to the one at New Salem, and conducted it along the same lines.

Each literary society constituted the "Town Hall" of its neighborhood. It was organized because men desired to become better informed. The members took a keen delight in discussing political issues, moral problems, and questions of social ethics. A community where ignorance abounds does not have such organizations. Our New Salem fathers believed in education, and they fostered it.

The subject of intemperance, or, as the pioneer put it, "the free use of ardent spirits," was an absorbing one at that time. The local Washingtonian Temperance Society,

fathered by Dr. John Allen, became an important factor in New Salem life. That society took on a deeper meaning to me when I learned that it was a unit of a national organization. The parent society was started by six reformed drunkards at Baltimore. They were converted in the rear room of a saloon, where they continued to hold meetings. One would not expect a sweeping reform to start with a carpenter, a coachmaker, two blacksmiths, a silversmith, and a tailor, but, within a few years, the example of these men had encouraged over 600,000 others to sign the temperance pledge, in a nation-wide crusade.

Dr. Allen, a graduate of Dartmouth College, came from Vermont to New Salem about 1830, seeking both health and an opportunity to practice his profession. He seems to have found both; for he soon had a flourishing practice, and he lived in the community until he reached an advanced age. He was a staunch member of the Presbyterian church, held positive religious convictions, and was as much concerned in the healing of men's souls as of their bodies.

Strangely, the churches opposed his temperance society. Even some of the pious Rutledges disapproved. In his "Recollections," McGrady Rutledge, Ann's cousin, says:

There was a doctor by the name of Allen. He was a eastern man. He got up what was called a temperance Society. Some people was opposed to it. My father was. I joined it. My father told me I had signed away my liberty. He said I could never take a dram without telling a lie. I told him I would stick to my promise. I have. There were some others signed when I did, their parents was opposed to it. They broke their pledge and one of them filled a drunkard's grave.

But many individuals supported the movement and took the pledge; and, in time, the increase in sobriety was so noticeable that it became a matter of comment. Charles James Fox Clarke wrote to his family in New Hampshire:

"The Washington Temperance Society has done much good here, but there are some old drunkards left."

We know that among others, Thomas J. Nance; his brother, Allen Q. Nance; and his sister, Mrs. Samuel Hill, were charter members, and that Thomas Nance made a speech before the society which began:

An address delivered before the New Salem Temperance Society, February 26, 1834. By Request of the Managers: —

Respected friends: I presume that temperance in the present acceptance of the term, has been much the theme of ridicule, if not of misrepresentation; because of the changes required by this reformation in the use of ardent spirits, I have always expected to meet opposition; the subject is of great agitation; the habit which is attempted to be reformed has been of long duration. It comes in direct competition with a well rivited habit chained to custom. Hence, on the origin of any new institution we hear cavil and opposition, whether it be good or bad. . . .

He continued to argue from the humane, the moral, and the economic viewpoints, and then concluded:

With pleasure we refer the interest of this cause to the ladies, we know your influence in society is very great. Man in every condition of life needs some soft hand to urge him on, and stimulate him to his duty. Is it not a lamentable truth that man too often prostitutes his boasted faculties to the destruction of female happiness? Is it not to be lamented that while the father and the brother have been feasting upon the flowing bowl, many of your sex have drunk the dregs of bitterest sorrow, and your best endeavors have been paralyzed by an important union with a lover of ardent spirits. These truths authorize the opinion that the success of the Temperance Reform will brighten your fairest prospects; and add much to your social enjoyment by a better cultivation of those amiable dispositions requisite to your temporal welfare.

Liquor was then on sale at New Salem, and drunkenness was not uncommon. Who attended this meeting and heard this speech? Were any of the Clary Grove boys there? Did

Samuel Hill and other storekeepers attend? Did Jack Kelso give this reform his support? What were the attitudes of Henry Onstott, Mentor Graham, and Abraham Lincoln toward these meetings? I should like to know.

More than a year later, Nance received an interesting comment concerning his temperance speech from his old friend and schoolmate, Mary Owens. In a letter from Green County, Kentucky, written in 1835, she said:

I can with pleasure say to you that the infant cause of temperance which you left, has almost grown to manhood, shedding abroad its benign influence through our land. We now and then have an opposer on this subject but they are fast hiding their diminished heads before the burst of light perceptible to the most casual observer. From Mr. Henry I learn of the opposition you have met with, among your anti-temperance friends, and some of them, I fear are allied to me by the ties of consanguinity. Patience and perseverance will accomplish wonders, and you I sincerely hope will ere long reap the reward of your exertions.

Despite all arguments, liquor continued to flow: but we may be sure, I think, that many individuals were influenced to lives of sobriety by the New Salem Washingtonian Temperance Society. Anyway, the existence of this organization, and the opposition to it, made men think; and it informed them concerning a problem the nation has not even yet been able to solve.

This survey of some of the intellectual standards and activities of the men of New Salem gives us a profound appreciation of their intellectual outlook. The New Salem man looked aloft as well as around. He considered the dignity and destiny of man as well as the common affairs of men. He indulged in far seeing, philosophic views. An invisible spirit, working in his soul, generated a culture that is ours by inheritance, and has produced the civilization which we now enjoy.





## LINCOLN'S HOPE DEFERRED

MURIEL BERNITT DRELL \*

The law was Abraham Lincoln's profession, and well did he labor at it. More beloved by far, however, was his avocation, politics. To it he gave much of his leisure time and, perhaps, more of his working hours than is generally thought consistent with legal advancement, although the gifted Lincoln rose to the status of corporation counsel. In Springfield and on the circuit, he talked with the plainest and the most able of local men, and he grew to understand needs and motives so well that in the 1850s he was to be invaluable to the State Central Committee of the Republican party.<sup>1</sup> But Lincoln was not content with political machinations behind the scenes. He diligently sought office; indeed, he yearned for political preferment. This ambition is not to be sneered at nor concealed. Why should not one man strive for office as another strives to become a doctor? There is always the chance that the one might become a statesman and the other a consulting specialist.

At the age of forty, the future Emancipator was thoroughly discouraged. The avocation which had begun so promisingly fifteen years before seemed to have come to

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\* Muriel Bernitt Drell of the staff of the University of Chicago Libraries, was for some years in charge of the Barton Collection of Lincolniana.

<sup>1</sup> Horace White, *Abraham Lincoln in 1854, an address delivered before the Illinois State Historical Society, at its 9th Annual Meeting at Springfield, Illinois, Jan. 30, 1908*, pp. 19-20.

an end, and a rather dull, unpopular end at that. In 1834, being at the time twenty-five years old, he had been elected to the lower house of the Illinois state legislature, and this office he held with increasing popular confidence till 1841. From this date until the congressional election of 1846, political conferences, letter writing, and strategic traveling, to say nothing of the law, occupied Abraham Lincoln. He watched every minute move of his other Whig rivals for the nomination. He wrote, privately of course, editorials for the newspapers. He cultivated John J. Hardin, former Congressman, hoping for his political favor, but quickly decried him when it seemed likely that Hardin wasn't going to keep an unwritten agreement for rotation in office, and permit the nomination to go to Lincoln. Lincoln even named his second child Edward Baker, after the Whig Congressman, Edward D. Baker. Lincoln wrote many letters advocating his own candidacy on the plea of "Turn about is fair play"! One of his dearest wishes was fulfilled when he was finally elected to Congress. However, under the old lame-duck system Lincoln was not to take his seat until December of 1847, more than a year after his victory at the polls! A year until he would participate in the national legislation and hand out his share of patronage! No wonder he wrote out his displeasure to his friend, Speed.<sup>2</sup> Lincoln wanted politics to be his life work. It was a job in which he could gain promotion, for well he knew how to win votes and influence bosses. It was, too, a position in which his talents could enable him to render satisfactory service.

Lincoln had barely reached Washington when he began to think of succeeding himself at the next election. The unwritten agreement at home to which he was party had forbidden his attempt at a second term, but like Hardin

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<sup>2</sup> Lincoln to Speed, Oct. 22, 1846, in Nicolay and Hay, *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln*, New and Enlarged edition, I, 298



and Baker before him, Lincoln hoped that his actions in Washington would so endear him to his constituents that they would demand his reelection. Imagine, then, Lincoln's profound discouragement when unpopularity began to be heaped upon him shortly after he took his seat in the Thirtieth Congress. His constituents in Illinois were thoroughly put out with his attitude toward the Mexican War, his position on slavery in the District of Columbia, and with his speeches. History has justified every stand Lincoln took in Congress, but history was cold comfort to the aching heart under the Rail Splitter's ill-fitting clothes. He knew his political career was done for. His wife was not to have a home in Washington, and he must return to his dingy office where he hoped the law would provide a living for his growing family. Perhaps, even, it were better for him to leave his scene of failure and political disgrace and go to the land of Oregon. Fate and the stern advice of his wife kept him in Illinois, and soon he began to rise once more in the esteem of the public and the Whig leaders. He acted as stump speaker for local Whig candidates. By 1854 he had so reinstated himself in public estimation that he was recognized as one of the strongest Whigs, and was urged to run for the state legislature from Sangamon County. Lincoln protested at first, for, after all, a man who has served in Congress does his prestige no good by subsequently accepting a lesser honor. Soon Lincoln became convinced that his party should put forth its strong men for the 1854 campaign and, hope springing eternal, he realized the opportunity to test his vote getting appeal, and therefore allowed the use of his name. He was reelected by a flattering majority on November 7,<sup>3</sup> and then realized that his diligence of the past five years had opened the way for his political advancement. He had been long-

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<sup>3</sup> After his election to the State Legislature in 1834, Lincoln never suffered defeat in the popular votes for any office which he sought.

ing for the Senatorship and now his hope seemed within the realm of possibility. He quickly resigned his seat in the state legislature so as not to damage his chances in the Senate contest of that same year.

You will recall that in those days Senators to Congress were chosen by the state legislatures. The elections were not so much matters of routine as are the elections of Presidents by the electoral college today. One knew who were the candidates for the United States Senate and one voted for members of the state legislature, but there was no guarantee that specific legislators would vote for a specific man for the Senate. Occasionally it was quite certain whom a legislature would select, as it was in 1859, but at other times it was anyone's guess, for example in 1855.

Abraham Lincoln gave one of his ablest speeches that autumn while stumping for the anti-Nebraska opposition to Douglas. The maturity of thought shown in this address was Lincoln's best card in his subsequent bid for the Senatorship. In Springfield, on October 4, he spoke, and he dared to speak on slavery. Now, slavery in 1854 was as explosive a topic as Bolshevism in 1920, yet he spoke fearlessly and with conviction. It was the first time he spoke at such length on the dread subject, although his general record on slavery was well known. He had voted for the Wilmot Proviso while in Congress, and he had introduced a bill for the removal of slavery in the District of Columbia. As a stump speaker he had rather haltingly supported the Compromise of 1850. There was nothing halting or languid, however, about his October 4 speech. Here he introduced into his address that ecstatic morality which was to be so characteristic of his future political speeches and so invaluable to the Republican party. I quote at some length from Horace White, who as a very young man heard this address:

Progressing with his theme, his words began to come faster

and faster and his face to light up with the rays of genius and his body to move in unison with his thoughts. His gestures were made with his body and head rather than with his arms. They were the natural expression of the man, and so perfectly adapted to what he was saying that anything different from it would have been quite inconceivable. Sometimes his manner was very impassioned, and he seemed transfigured with his subject. Perspiration would stream from his face, and each particular hair would stand on end. Then the inspiration that possessed him took possession of his hearers also. His speaking went to the heart because it came from the heart. I have heard celebrated orators who could start thunders of applause without changing any man's opinion. Mr. Lincoln's eloquence was of the higher type, which produced conviction in others because of the conviction of the speaker himself. His listeners felt that he believed every word he said, and that, like Martin Luther, he would go to the stake rather than abate one jot or tittle of it.<sup>4</sup>

Political parties were in a great state of flux in 1854. A new one, the Republican, was appearing in many of the states; the Democratic party seemed on the point of dissolution; the Whigs were also divided among themselves; the Know-Nothings knew at least how to secure voters; and the Free Soilers were still a force with which to reckon. Lincoln in 1854 counted himself a Whig. Immediately following his October 4 speech a citizens' meeting was called for the purpose of helping to organize the new party in Illinois. Now there were good reasons why it was more difficult to form a Republican Party in the Prairie State than in other northern states, and those reasons compelled Lincoln to resort to a ruse to enable him to stay away from meeting and yet not lose the potential support of these political enthusiasts.<sup>5</sup> He remained a candidate of the Whig party for the election as Senator from Illinois.

The fight was three-cornered, — between James Shields

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<sup>4</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

(incumbent and Democrat), Lyman Trumbull (anti-Nebraska Democrat, soon a Republican, later Liberal Republican, and still later Democrat), and Abraham Lincoln, the strongest of the Whigs, with suspected leanings toward Free-Soilism and toward the incipient Black Republicans.

Thursday afternoon, February 8, 1855, saw the Hall of Representatives in Springfield jammed to capacity. Mrs. Lincoln was there, as were many other ladies. The suspense was great. Party allegiance was a weak thing at best that winter, while anti-Nebraskanism was a living principle, and there was no predicting the outcome. The first ballot gave Lincoln the lead, 44; Shields, 41; and Trumbull, 5. Fifty votes were required for a choice. Ballots followed quickly. On the seventh, Governor Matteson entered the contest by a cleverly planned stroke. Finally realizing his inevitable defeat, and the certain election of Matteson if he didn't come to Trumbull's side, Lincoln instructed what few supporters remained to him to make Trumbull their choice. This was done, and Lincoln's ardent desire for office was dashed to the ground. We know now that his hope was merely deferred, but Lincoln slunk back to his office, very sick at heart. That evening he was able to shake Trumbull's hand at a reception given by Ninian W. Edwards (Lincoln's brother-in-law), but Mrs. Lincoln who recognized her husband's ability a generation ahead of everyone else was so upset that for many years after this she refused to speak to Mrs. Trumbull, her erstwhile best friend.

Mr. Lincoln once more took up his weary circuit-riding.

We dare not condemn too harshly the legislature that chose turbulent Trumbull rather than the since-immortal Lincoln. In 1855 he was not immortal, and Trumbull had a state-wide reputation. Lincoln, the master of prose, had up to that time written but one great speech, and he was nearly 46 years old. He was filled with hopes which were



constantly being deferred by fate, but he had thus far fallen short of accomplishment. The regular Democrats were enraged by the election of this party traitor who, as it developed, gave backbone to the new Republican party and for a time was its strongest leader until the Rail Splitter took over that function. It was good for Lincoln that his hope was deferred.

The North, and especially the Old Northwest, had been seething for years with economic and political dissatisfaction over the conduct of the major parties. In 1854, the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska were organized and the time-honored old Missouri Compromise was repealed. There was an explosion of rage throughout the Northern states. Douglas made his since-famous remark that he could travel from Boston to Chicago by the light of his burning effigies. The old parties were rent in twain from the top to the bottom. Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin quickly perfected state organizations for a party to be named Republican.

In Illinois the leaders dared not act so quickly. Illinois was the nation in miniature, hence the importance of a study of its political history. The state was not wholly northern in its geography, as were Wisconsin and Michigan. Much of its great strength stretched south, and the tipmost counties raised southern crops. The northern counties raised cold wintry winds and an unpleasant sense of duty in their citizens that made it difficult to unite them with south Illinoisians in an attempt to form a new party. Perhaps nearly half the state's population was of southern birth, and their suspicion of anything connected with the word abolition may be imagined. The men in the northern counties were of New England origin and, though eager to follow the example of the other states, had to consider the wishes of their friends, and also their enemies, in the southern counties. The central counties



were a heterogeneous mixture of people of various origins.

It is very difficult to form a new party of thousands of men who have had several different backgrounds of political loyalty. Free Soilism was strong in sections of Illinois; the Whigs were divided into several allegiances including those who still mentally voted for the dead Henry Clay each time they cast a ballot; the Democrats were once very strong and it was not an open-and-shut task to wean away all the anti-Nebraska Democrats; finally, there were thousands of Know-Nothings in the state, most of whom disliked the major leaders in all the parties. Few Republicans agreed upon just precisely what was to be done with slavery and its extension. Besides, a party can't exist permanently on a platform of just one plank. Then, too, the new party was considered "radical" (what a useful catch-all word that is!) by the propertied and respected persons in Illinois, and until these could be won Lincoln was correct in tactfully omitting to attend the organization meeting following his October 4 speech in Springfield. What he actually did was to clamber into his buggy and drive to Pekin and attend to his cases in the Tazewell Circuit Court.

Lincoln was not unmindful of the opportunity that lay with the strengthening of the new party, and he was alert to the realization that the day was at hand when mundane political parties could triumph by striking a lofty moral tone. Herndon relates that with the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, Lincoln's political conversations became quite animated. The day of compromise had passed. Slavery and freedom were like two wild beasts in sight of each other, but weakly held apart. Conflict was inevitable. There is no doubt that the frustration of his Senatorial ambitions had a marked effect on Lincoln's political views in the tendency toward radicalism, although Herndon assures us that Lincoln knew he "dared not" be too outspoken-

en.<sup>6</sup> At indignation meetings over the Kansas affairs, Lincoln cautioned moderation in word and deed.

The Republican party grew in numbers in 1855, and this influx of members at first diluted its principles rather than strengthened them. The party organization did not yet cover the state, but was confined to county bodies. It was not until May of 1856 that a convention was held to organize the Republican party in the state of Illinois. This Lincoln attended as a Republican and no longer a Whig. We cannot be certain of the precise date when Lincoln joined the Republican ranks,<sup>7</sup> although we know that it was in the spring of 1856, and we do know quite definitely that he did not join in 1855.

Lincoln's success was bound up with that of the new party, and his rising fortune may be surmized by the fact that the Republicans captured the governorship in 1856 although it was a presidential year and Buchanan was victorious in Illinois. Then, too, Lincoln had been mentioned for vice president on the National Republican ticket of that year, and also as a possible candidate for governor. While these are merely "mentions" and not of too great significance, they do show that Lincoln was climbing to political fortune.

His party, too, was climbing up the ladder of fame, and a few of the reasons for this success must be given now. First, the Republicans began to lose some of their radicalism. Their first torrential opposition to slavery in the territory of Kansas led many cautious men to conclude with-

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<sup>6</sup> "This frustration of Lincoln's ambition had a marked effect on his political views. It was plain to him now that the 'irrepressible conflict' was not far ahead. With the strengthening of his faith in a just cause so long held in abeyance he became more defiant each day. But in the very nature of things he dared not be as bold and outspoken as I. With him every word and sentence had to be weighed and its effects calculated before being uttered." William H. Herndon, and Jesse W. Weik, *Herndon's Lincoln, The True Story of a Great life* . . . Chicago, 1890, II, 377-378.

<sup>7</sup> Herndon, in *ibid.*, II, 382-83, has his own tale of how he, personally, pushed Lincoln into the party by forging his name to a call for a county convention.

out much investigation that the Republican party stood for the immediate abolition of slavery even within the states where it existed by legal right. The rights of states in those days were very sacred, even to northern men, and the rights of property perhaps even more sacred. The substantial citizens regarded the Republicans as men with long tongues and no homes. A careful reading of the state platforms for 1856 and 1858, however, shows that the party was rapidly growing more conservative. The 1856 platform harps upon slavery, Kansas, and the wicked national administration, with one small exception of a paragraph on the wasting of state funds. Of course we must remember that they dared not give other planks because the Republicans didn't agree on anything else and hardly on slavery. Yet the platform seems to have been written by a group of men who were determined to use political action to promote their anti-extension of slavery ideals.

In 1858, the state platform when it did touch on slavery did so on a national scale. No plank was confined to provincial matters in Illinois, and the expenses of the national government (not the state as in 1856) were denounced, and promises of reform on a *national* scale were made. Reading the two platforms one cannot but conclude that if the '56 resolutions were written by men determined to use political action to promote their anti-extension of slavery ideals, the '58 pronouncement was the work of men who had chosen to use anti-extension of slavery ideals to promote their political activity!

Second, the Republicans forged ahead because they began to take cognizance of the economic needs of the discontented west. The 1856 platform ignored such wordly things, but the one written two years later discussed free labor, improvements of rivers and harbors, and a "high-way" to the Pacific. These baits caught voters who didn't care a hoot about slavery.

Third, the Dred Scott decision (handed down after the 1857 inauguration) awoke many to the danger of slavery extension not only into the territories but actually into the northern states themselves. That decision made thousands of Republicans, and gave Lincoln another handle for his political hopes. The Supreme Court was unwittingly on the side of the Republican party when it handed down that decision! There are some who say it has been on that side ever since, but perhaps we had better not go into that.

Fourth, if the Republicans began to take over the economic needs of the commercial classes, it began no less to parade to the common men an extremely virtuous air about the immorality of slavery. Now these are often regarded as inconsistent, and people accuse the Republican party of being both conservative and radical in its efforts to win votes. I do not agree with this condemnation entirely. There were an increasing number of men who regarded the slavery extension as wrong, and who hoped for the gradual (and perhaps not so gradual) abolition of slavery even in the states. If this be so, anti-slavery sentiment was becoming part of the social *mores*, and it is never considered radical to conform to the *mores* of the times. It was necessary, however, to convince the multitude that the Republican party was sincere in its belief concerning slavery and to arouse the latent indignation of men too busy with daily work to become overwrought on the wickedness of slavery unless stimulated by leaders whose earnestness could not be doubted. Abraham Lincoln was the one who performed this service for his party better than anyone else. He talked and reached the very hearts of men! His intense personal dislikes for the Institution was recognized as genuine, and yet his shrewd political flair as well as his regard for an orderly and moderate society kept his audiences from turning into mobs.

There is still another reason, and an obvious one, to ac-



count for the rapid growth of the party that was to fulfill the hope that burned in Lincoln's bosom. The Republican party began to forge ahead due to the split in the Democratic ranks. Divide one party, and the other almost invariably wins. Once the Republicans achieved some success it acted as a fulcrum for further victory till the party spread to grand dimensions. No wonder that one of the Republican newspapers exulted in a burst of rhetoric:

Those persons who have carefully observed the growth of Republicanism in Illinois, since the organization of the Republican party at Bloomington, two years ago, cannot but be excited with the most profound feelings of admiration and wonder at the astonishing developments of so short a period in the history of a party which had its origin in the hearts of only a few earnest opponents of the party in power. . . . It was found necessary to unite the friends of freedom from all parties, and there were many differences which it was apprehended would distract the new party even before the close of the campaign. . . . But at the close of the campaign men of the various political antecedents were found standing upon the platform of Republicanism, and the Democrat, the Whig, the Abolitionist and American, all were seen going together as one great army of freemen; while the slave drivers and their minions trembled as the fiat went forth — Illinois redeemed! <sup>8</sup>

Although it is true that the break in the Democratic party gave thousands of votes to the Republicans, it is nevertheless true that it portended danger for specific Republican leaders in Illinois. The Democrats had divided pro-Douglas and pro-Buchanan. The fight was terrible in its intensity. Douglas' friends were turned out of office, other Democratic job holders were not allowed to be neutral but were compelled to take a stand against him, and the administration press heaped calumny upon his head. The eastern Republicans saw their chance. Here was a

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<sup>8</sup> *The Bureau County Republican* (Princeton), June 24, 1858.



great man, one who still had tremendous influence with the voters although he had been disowned by his party. Why not seize the opportunity to bring him into the new Republican party, and achieve triumphant victory in the wake of Douglas' enormous prestige! This was a fine idea for the easterners to advance, because Douglas came from Illinois. He wouldn't snatch victory from an eastern Republican, but from an Illinoisian! What did the Republicans in the Prairie State think about adopting Douglas into their party?

Surprisingly enough, there seems to have been a temporary willingness on the part of several Republicans to receive Douglas into their ranks for the sake of his personal prestige and the hundreds of votes he could command. They were not willing to offer him the plums of the party, however, but wished him to be on "probation" for perhaps five years. If Douglas ever considered joining the new party he must have reconsidered it the instant he learned he was not to be given a nomination to office. The year was 1858 and Douglas' seat in the Senate was coming up for renewal. He was forty-five years old that year, and at the very apex of a glorious career. He could not humbly turn to the Republicans and wait for the crumbs to fall from their table. No! He would not turn Republican, and he would win his new term in the Senate!

The Republican press continued to laud Douglas with heavy headlines, and to denounce the Buchananites, but this was for the purpose of keeping the Democrats a-quarreling. The editors were more than a little piqued that he did not come humbly into the party, bringing his followers behind him, and he was denounced accordingly. Said one editor, "Douglas is an adroit politician but no great statesman — after all."<sup>9</sup> By September, when it seemed that Douglas was putting up altogether too good a fight

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<sup>9</sup> *Mendota Press*, quoted in *The Bureau County Republican*, Feb. 25, 1858.

for reëlection, the papers grew more bitter. One choice passage may suffice to show my point:

The Republicans of Illinois were unwilling to accept the author of the Nebraska bill as their leader; but were not opposed to receiving him on probation. This would not answer his purpose. He had made up his mind to "rule or ruin" — or at least to attempt it; and when the Republicans refused to take him as their leader, like the dog, he returned to his vomit, and is now making himself more obnoxious than ever.<sup>10</sup>

What would it have meant to Richard Yates, to Norman B. Judd, to Owen Lovejoy to have had Douglas come into the Republican party? More particularly, for our interest, what would it have meant to Abraham Lincoln? To each of these men, it would have meant the abrupt end to their political advancement, and very likely their political deaths. These Illinois Republican leaders were practically unknown so far as national reputation was concerned, but Douglas was universally known and widely recognized for the great man he was. If Judd, Lovejoy, Yates, and Lincoln were young men they might very easily have taken Douglas into their party, and hoped to supplant him in power and prestige as they grew in age. As facts were, they were each approximately Douglas' age, and Lincoln was four years older. Forty-nine is the prime of life today, but it came close to being old age in Lincoln's time. Indeed, the Civil War president referred to himself as an old man when he was but fifty-two years of age. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." Lincoln's hope would have been not deferred but killed had Douglas achieved the Republican leadership. He would have continued a shambling lawyer, clever enough to gratify the ambition of most men, but dying of the dry-rot that comes from a consciousness of not having fulfilled the

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, Sept. 2, 1858.

promise that is in one. You can understand now, I believe, why it was so important to these men who wanted office that Douglas be left out of their party unless he was willing to forego all nominations for several years.

There are some historians today who think the Republicans were mistaken when they brushed Douglas aside. I cannot agree. It would not necessarily have stopped the slavery conflict to adopt him. After all, Douglas didn't care whether slavery was voted up or down, and the Democratic party had been rather friendly toward the Institution. Yet for all this, the nation was embittered and was approaching fratricidal conflict. Better a party that was, or was believed to be, definitely opposed to slavery expansion. The Republican party might have achieved the presidency with Douglas as its banner leader, but it certainly achieved that goal without him. Hence there was no practical good to have been gained from making Douglas a Republican. With him a Republican, Lincoln would never have been president, and our country's history would lack that grand sublimity which he gave to it and which he sealed with his life's blood.

The Republicans of Illinois continued their own way, and their editors, having in mind not only the 1858 Senatorial campaign but the presidential election of 1860, hurled defiance at the "crucify Illinois" advice of their eastern brethren. Douglas remained a Democrat.

I have previously mentioned how Lincoln nearly won the Senatorial election of 1855, losing it merely by reason of temporary party expediency and the wiles of Governor Matteson. Three years later it was regarded as a matter of course that he should receive the nomination, for he had served the party as an extremely able stump speaker and he had the affection of the voters. Accordingly, when the Republican State Convention met in Springfield, June 16, a resolution was passed declaring "that Abraham Lincoln

is the first and only choice of the Republicans for the United States Senate as the successor of Stephen A. Douglas." That evening Lincoln delivered his carefully prepared "House Divided" speech. In his opening paragraph he struck the key-note for his political future. His advisors had urged — nay, begged — him not to utter those words, but Lincoln knew the time had come to say aloud what many were thinking. He departed from the neither fish-nor-foul attitude of the Democrats, and gave his party that firm stand on the immorality of slavery and the spread of slavery which proved to be the height of political wisdom. He couched his most famous prophecy in the language of the Bible — in itself enough to bear weight with the voters of eighty years ago. Then, too, those words were well-known and much used in the 1850s. Lincoln was not the first man to apply them to politics. Like Shakespeare before him, Lincoln put the day's common-places into his own crucible, and by the chemistry of genius made them his own forever. You've heard the words before, but they are worthy of repeating once more:

If we could first know where we are, and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do, and how to do it. We are now far into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only not ceased but has constantly augmented. In my opinion, it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved — I do not expect the house to fall — but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its



advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South.<sup>11</sup>

To his listeners these fine, traditional words meant that the Republican party was about to take a firm stand on the question of slavery. Just what that stand would be was not yet known.

Having heard Lincoln in the prophet's mantle, let us now see how he dealt with his political opponent, Stephen A. Douglas. The Little Giant, too, had been speaking from glorious heights. Popular sovereignty in excelsis! Lincoln neatly pricked his bubble of sublimity by that sharpest of all pinpoints, ridicule. On the day following Douglas' Chicago speech of July 9, Lincoln delighted his audience by chiding the Little Giant for being so deadly serious about "popular sovereignty."

Popular Sovereignty! everlasting Popular Sovereignty! [Laughter and cheers.] Let us for a moment enquire into that vast matter of Popular Sovereignty. . . .

. . . It is enough for my purpose to ask this crowd when ever a Republican said anything against it? They never said anything against it, but they have constantly spoken for it; and whosoever will undertake to examine the platform and the speeches of responsible men of the party and of irresponsible men, too, if you please, will be unable to find one word from anybody in the Republican ranks, opposed to that popular sovereignty which Judge Douglas thinks that he has invented. [Applause.] I suppose that Judge Douglas will claim in a little while, that he is the inventor of the idea that the people should govern themselves [cheers and laughter]; that nobody ever thought of such a thing until he brought it forward. We do remember, that in that old Declaration of Independence, it is said that "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. . . ." There is the origin of popular sovereignty.

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<sup>11</sup> *Complete Works*, III, 1-2.



[Loud applause.] Who, then, shall come in at this day and claim that he invented it? [Laughter and applause.]<sup>12</sup>

Of course the catch in Lincoln's sarcasm was that Douglas never claimed to have invented popular sovereignty. Lincoln knew how to amuse his audiences, and to deflate his opponent's strongest argument. He used the same weapon again in his Springfield speech of July 17.

. . . he [Douglas] is contending for the right of the people, when they come to make a State constitution, to make it for themselves, and precisely as best suits themselves. I say again, that is quixotic. I defy contradiction when I declare that the judge can find no one to oppose him on that proposition on principle. . . .

The dispute was upon the question of fact, whether the Le-compton constitution had been fairly formed by the people or not. Mr. Buchanan and his friends have not contended for the contrary principle any more than the Douglas men or the Republicans. . . .

. . . I state again that, as a matter of principle, there is no dispute upon the right of a people in a Territory merging into a State to form a constitution for themselves without outside interference from any quarter. This being so, what is Judge Douglas going to spend his life for? Does he expect to stand up in majestic dignity, and go through his *apotheosis* and become a god, in the maintaining of a principle which neither man nor mouse in all God's creation is opposing?<sup>13</sup>

Not being so well known as Douglas, Lincoln resorted to a ruse to gather large audiences. He "happened" to be wherever Douglas was speaking and after Douglas had concluded his speech, Lincoln would rise to address the multitude that had assembled to hear the famous Douglas. Lincoln soon realized, however, that by this stratagem he was admitting too openly his inferiority to Douglas, and so, knowing his ability to argue logically and to keep his

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<sup>12</sup> As quoted in *The Bureau County Republican*, July 22, 1858.

<sup>13</sup> *Complete Works*, III, 162-64.

temper while Douglas was losing his, he challenged the Little Giant to a series of debates. This was a superb political move. Anyone combatting the renowned Douglas would share in the latter's nation-wide publicity. If the aforesaid anyone was even fairly successful, the public would be pleasantly surprised, and if the anyone challenging Douglas happened by chance to worst him, — well, well! It was infinitely clever strategy, and achieved him nation-wide, albeit temporary fame. The lanky lawyer was pushing hard toward his goal. Was that goal the Senate chamber, or was it, perhaps, a more important house in the same city of Washington, D. C.?

While Lincoln was taking his firm stand against the extension of slavery into the territories and compelling his party to follow him, the other Republicans and the newspaper editors were at pains to impress upon the public the fact that the party did not advocate abolition of slavery in the southern states. They indentified as synonymous "the cause of humanity and the welfare of the Republican party"<sup>14</sup> but they strove mightily to minimize the opprobrium of the word "Abolitionist." Lovejoy, Trumbull, and especially Lincoln were very careful in their public addresses to state that they believed slavery an immoral thing, but that the Republican party intended only "to place the subject of slavery where our fathers left it, so that the people may rest in the belief that slavery is 'in the course of ultimate extinction'."<sup>15</sup> Somehow, these cautious words did not ring out as the true doctrine of the righteous Republican party. People were convinced that there was more up the Republican sleeve than this.

With the exception of Trumbull the leaders in the national organization of the Republican party were eastern men. The future success of their party required that they

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<sup>14</sup> *The Bureau County Republican*, June 17, 1858.

<sup>15</sup> Editorial, "What We Expect to Accomplish," in *ibid.*, Sept. 9, 1858.

help secure Republican victory in Illinois, since, as we have heard, that state was a miniature of the nation. However, duty called in vain; their infatuation for Douglas was too strong. They were cold toward Lincoln and, occasionally insultingly lukewarm. Iowa, on the other hand, thrilled with anticipation. The *Burlington State Gazette* waxed eloquent and said:

What a night next Tuesday will be all over the Union! The whole Nation is watching with the greatest possible anxiety for the result of that day. No state has ever fought so great a battle as that which Illinois is to fight on that day. Its result is big with the fate of our Government and the Union and the telegraph wires will be kept hot with it until the result is known all over the land.<sup>16</sup>

You all know the story. On November 2, the Republican slate of state offices was victorious, and Lincoln won the popular vote over Douglas. Nevertheless, Douglas was chosen Senator. This was due in great part to the archaic apportionment in the legislature. The northern counties had increased rapidly in population, and had a reapportionment bill been passed by an earlier assembly it seems probable that Lincoln would have become Senator. In other words, as the *Illinois State Journal* put it,<sup>17</sup> the thirty-five Lincoln members of the Lower House represented more people than did the forty Douglas members, and had true apportionment been the rule, the thirty-five Lincolmites might have been forty-one.

Another reason for the defeat of Lincoln was the weather. Truly it was "Democratic" weather all over the state on November 2, 1858 — a cold, dreary downpour.

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<sup>16</sup> Oct. 29, 1858, quoted in Edwin Erle Sparks, *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858* (Springfield, 1908), p. 533.

<sup>17</sup> *The Illinois State Journal*, Nov. 10, 1858. Sparks, in *ibid.*, gives the date of the *State Journal* as Nov. 9, but the *Journal* was a weekly and was printed on the 10th. On the same page 533, the quotation he ascribes to the issue of Nov. 3 cannot be found therein, but appears in Nov. 10.

It is obvious that impassable roads kept many Republican farmers from driving to the polls.

Despite these extenuating circumstances, the bitter fact remained — Lincoln was a defeated candidate. Only the future could say whether he was to be also a defeated *man*.

It is true that although Lincoln had been defeated, his chances of victory were good if he chose to run again. Next time he must win, however, for he had been beaten twice for the Senate, and a candidate thrice defeated becomes merely an “also-ran” to his fellows. Late in the year 1858 and early ’59 there were a few, only a few, suggestions that Lincoln be made President of the United States. He was very careful to take pen in hand and elaborately deny his worthiness for this office (not denying, however, his wishes), at the same time asking that his letter be kept confidential!<sup>18</sup> Since his correspondent was a newspaper man, Lincoln no doubt knew just how confidential his modest words would be kept! The “presidential bee” had certainly stung him, as it stings every politician who has enough ability to rise above the position of ward heeler. The office of President is a tremendous one, and everyone knows that there are more gifted men outside that office than ever get in, yet the thought of all that honor and power is enough to cause every man’s pulse to beat harder as he meditates at his desk, and to bring the far-away film to his eyes while a half smile lurks at the corner of his mouth.

By January of 1859, Abraham Lincoln’s popularity had not come even close to that of being a “favorite son.” Even if it could soar to such heights there were the Eastern Republicans to be reckoned with. His Cooper Union speech had not yet been given, and their only knowledge of him was a grudging admiration for the man who dared to run against the Little Giant. Besides, the political mor-

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<sup>18</sup> *Complete Works*, V, 127-28, letter to T. J. Pickett, a newspaper editor.



tality among "favorite sons" has always been very high in American politics. How many brilliant, capable men have gone down to a bitter old age because a quarter of a century before when they seemed on the very crest of popularity some freak of politics had blasted their hopes, and the strategic moment had left them forever! How many men have had Clay's choice of being right rather than President! And here was the Prairie Lawyer fresh from his second defeat for the Senatorship, ridiculed by the East, and not even a "favorite son" in his own state, thinking of the Presidency. It was the depth of foolishness, and we feel a gush of pity for the wounded heart under the rusty coat when Lincoln said after the 1858 election, "Well, it hurts too much to laugh, and I'm too big to cry."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in George Fort Milton, *The Eve of Conflict* (Boston and New York, 1934), on p. 351. The reference is to Weber MSS., 44. In a letter to the author, March 27, 1939, Mr. Milton states that the Weber manuscript is privately owned.





## THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATES

HARRY J. LYTLE \*

The capitol building of Illinois had grown old and weary through its ten eventful years of life. Plastering had fallen from the ceilings, cob webs clung to the corners of its dingy rooms, and walls were bulging as if to fall. It offered memories to the seasoned legislators and menacing gloom to the new ones. Within her walls the political gladiators had fought out the plans and policies of the frontier state now only six years older than the temple of government itself.

Legislators old and new were assembling in Vandalia for the session of 1834 and 1835. Peter Cartwright, venerable circuit rider of the Methodist Church, had refused to run for reelection because he had found the legislative hall too ungodly and dishonest for a pious man. In his place, Sangamon County had sent Abraham Lincoln, a young and inexperienced Whig, a business failure whom a democratic President had made postmaster of the little log village of New Salem. He was awkward in motion, homely and honest of face and melancholy of countenance. Over his sharp, deep-set eyes and narrow face was a bristling shock of coarse, black hair, and shielding his slender body was \$60 worth of new but ill-fitting clothes. To Stephen A. Douglas, a junior lobbyist, who was standing in the legis-

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lative hall for the first time, the sight was the most amusing he had ever seen in human form.

Douglas had come to the opening session with the swarm of vultures who constantly haunted the legislative halls when laws, jobs and patronage were at stake. The inquisitive eyes of Lincoln quickly came to rest upon his dwarf-like frame and his mighty head sunk deeply into a mane of dark brown hair. "He is the least man I have ever seen," passed through Lincoln's discerning mind.

From this meeting day until the Confederate guns sounded the tragic doom of a war between the states at Sumter, their paths were to repeatedly cross. Fighting always from opposing camps; fighting without either asking or giving quarter; fighting for political preferment in a Union of States which both loved as much as life itself. A fight that ended in a union of principles as secession tore the union of states apart. The legislative session of 1836-1837 found the two young and ambitious politicians meeting as members of the Tenth General assembly at Vandalia. This was the only session which Douglas attended as a member.

Lincoln, as leader of the "long nine" from Sangamon County, assisted in trading the state into near financial ruin as he rounded up the necessary votes to move the capital from Vandalia to Springfield. His vision then was Springfield where a friend of Black Hawk war days was waiting to receive him into a legal partnership. Lincoln continued in the legislative hall for two more terms, then gave his time to the practice of law and the pursuit of politics with time out for romance and disillusionment.

Douglas moved swiftly from the legislative hall into national fame as he caught the atmosphere of argument and political preferment. We find him moving from the office of Register of the Land office in Springfield to Secretary of the State of Illinois, to Justice of the Supreme

Court of Illinois, to member of Congress and at the youthful age of thirty-three, to the peak of his official political journey when in December, 1846, the legislature of Illinois sent him to the United States Senate.

These years for Lincoln reveal a marked educational advancement, but little more. He had time to view with envy the rise of Douglas and to tell stories to the groups assembled around the hotel lobby stove while traveling the Eighth Judicial Circuit.

He lectured to the Washington Temperance Society in Springfield; he wrote one of the "Lost Township" or "Rebecca Letters" and almost fought a duel with offended James Shields over the slander he had heaped upon the head of this injured Democrat. On November 4th, 1842, he took unto himself a bride to help and to haunt him to the end of his days.

The unschooled Whig was still a circuit lawyer and a local country politician when the year of 1846 came into view.

In the fall of 1832, Preacher Cartwright had crushed Lincoln's first legislative aspirations and became the only political opponent ever to defeat him in an election decided by the popular vote of the people. They met again in the Congressional campaign of 1846. Cartwright told the people that Lincoln was a godless man and Lincoln told Cartwright that he was going to Congress; and he did.

As Douglas took his seat for the first time in the Senate, Lincoln started his first and only term in Congress where he became known for his support of the "Wilmot Proviso" and his "Spot" speech on the Mexican War. Douglas, already a political power in Washington, moved in the best society while Lincoln told stories in the cloak room of the House and the bowling alleys of the city.

The slavery question, that had on two previous occasions threatened the tranquility of our people again burst

into flames in 1850 more intense than on either previous occasion. Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, the two great stalwarts of the Senate who had piloted the country's destiny safely over many perilous political rapids, had reached the sunset years of their constructive careers. Douglas who had risen rapidly to commanding heights among the Democrats of the Senate, sensing the danger, went to Clay and Webster with all his new-found power and political cunning and aided them in the construction of the last great slavery compromise.

Lincoln watched the stirring events in the National capital, studied his legal cases and continued to build his expanding mind, as the "pressure of necessity" brought the judgment day for the colored man closer to a national crisis.

The last great battle of Clay and Webster for the perpetuity of the Union was scarcely part of our national heritage when Douglas cast his eyes upon the Presidency. At the National Democratic Convention of 1852 held in Baltimore, his name became so impressive that he found it politically expedient to stump the nation for Franklin Pierce.

Opening at Richmond, Virginia in July, he sounded abolition charges against the Whigs that added flames to a smoldering fire. He rebuked them for calling General Pierce "A fainting General." He accused them of stealing a slavery plank from the Democratic platform, and he charged that their candidate, General Scott, was forced upon the South by the North and that "every Southern delegation voted against him more than fifty times." His thundering charges reached to the Springfield home of the country politician who had gone into political slumbers upon his retirement from Congress and awoke a statesman.

It was an aroused Lincoln that addressed the Springfield people in answer to Douglas in August of 1852. At last



the son of Nancy Hanks was starting on his final mission, for Douglas in his rush for power had opened up the slavery door! Lincoln entered and assured his followers that it was laughable to set Pierce up as a great general and that the people would continue to laugh at such claims in spite of Judge Douglas and all his scolding. Even the slavery plank that Douglas had accused the Whigs of stealing from the Democratic platform was from the pen of Henry Clay as he wrote it into the Compromise of 1850. The Virginia delegation had proven false the charges against General Scott by the votes they cast for him every ballot after the first.

Few in Congress could have sensed in 1850 that their labors were little more than "Slave baiting," and that in scarce four years the nation was to be rocked to its foundation by Douglas who, armed with powers acquired in Senatorial debate, was to engineer the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and by so doing unleash the "Gods of Hate," both North and South.

Angered Democrats of Chicago, marching to the doleful solemnity of the tolling church bells through lanes of flags floating at half mast, crowded into the streets in front of the balcony from which Douglas was to speak in defense of his recent legislative and political actions, to hiss and to boo, while his friends among them cheered and offered fight. The tireless energy of Douglas and his will to win saved many wavering Democrats for the party that year.

Lincoln sat back of Douglas in an open window sensing all the commotion while pondering his reply and plotting his political future.

Speaking on the following evening he started building the foundation of his rise to fame. Long weary years, studded with bitter disappointments, had brought him poise and understanding, with courage and determination. He



would beard the "Little Giant" in his slavery "pen" by meeting him in open debate.

In the first great contest of joint discussion held in Peoria eighty-seven years ago, we find Lincoln declaring it to be despotism for a white man to govern himself and to govern another man without that other's consent. He wanted Kansas and Nebraska to be homes for free white people where they could use and develop their free labor away from the degrading competition of slavery. He said this country should be a place where poor white people could remove to and rear their families in peace and contentment. He believed the time had arrived to repurify the republican robe and return it to the position the founding fathers had given it. He wanted the country saved by stopping the spread of slavery so that all succeeding people would "rise up and call us blessed."

Douglas believed that Kansas should be a territory into which the people could move and do as they pleased with the slavery question, just as the people of the Southern states had been doing for years. He accused the northern people of being unwilling to trust these people to regulate their own affairs.

Douglas said that when he entered Congress and found a line dividing free and slave states, it did not occur to him that slavery in the South was not right. He paid his respects to the "know nothing" party as a group who would have kept such statesmen as Hamilton and Gallatin out of the country and he warned his fellow Democrats to keep clear of any alliance that would entangle them with any group whose policies would restrict the privileges of any citizen.

Through the years, as Kansas bled, elements of slavery expansion were marching on to greater power. In 1856 a new party composed of old line Whigs and disgruntled Democrats offered John C. Fremont as a presidential can-

didate with unusual foundling strength. Friends on opposite sides of the Mason and Dixon line grew to distrust each other. Churches even yielded "holy writ" for slavery controversy. Underground railroads escorted black folks to Canada and to freedom. The policy-creating statements of Chief Justice Taney in the "Dred Scott" decision charged the atmosphere with apprehension and caused men to fear and hate.

Douglas broke with his party leaders over an administration-made constitution for mob-ridden Kansas and lost the use of the power of patronage on the eve of his Senatorial contest. Preston Brooks had unmercifully beaten Charles Sumner while seated at his desk in the Senate chamber. The nation was a slavery tinder-box as the senatorial campaign of 1858 swung into action with the major parties holding their state conventions.

The Democratic State Convention assembling in Springfield in April, 1858, found the Douglas men militant and in control. They adopted a platform of "State Rights" and "Popular Sovereignty" and demanded, with thundering applause, the submission of the Lecompton Constitution to the people of Kansas. Most conspicuous and dignified of all the delegates was the aged and white-haired Peter Cartwright. When told that Lincoln had joined the black Republicans, he shut his eyes in anger and in an incoherent voice thundered . . . "he — gone to the black Republicans! Gone to Halifax!"

The Republican party, young, vigorous and deeply enslaved with political intrigues, assembled in Springfield on a lovely June day for their State convention. Party stalwarts like Norman B. Judd and Charles L. Wilson of Chicago and Abraham Lincoln of Springfield had skillfully planned the destruction of the Senatorial aspirations of "Long John" Wentworth, publisher of the Chicago *Democrat* and mayor of that city.

At the close of the nomination of candidates for state offices, the march for Lincoln started with the Chicago delegation parading down the aisle with a banner inscribed, "Cook County for Lincoln." In the midst of the demonstration a Peoria delegate moved to change the slogan to "Illinois is for Abraham Lincoln." As the noise of the prolonged approval abated Charles L. Wilson, in a resolution read before the assembly, "Resolved that Abraham Lincoln is the first and only choice of the Republicans of Illinois for the United States Senate, as a successor to Stephen A. Douglas."

Lincoln in his speech of acceptance gave public substance to a philosophy expressed to Judge T. Lyle Dickey four years before as he sat on the edge of the bed in a double room occupied by them while traveling the Eighth Judicial Circuit. Half mumbling to himself he said, "I tell you Dickey, this nation cannot exist half slave and half free." On this jubilant Republican night in Springfield, he reminded his Republican followers that the nation was far into the fifth year of a policy made to end slavery agitation, but agitation under it had grown into a national peril. "In my opinion, it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed: A house divided against itself cannot stand."

#### RETURN TO CHICAGO

The welcome extended to Senator Douglas and his beautiful and cultured wife upon their return to Chicago in July of 1858 was one of confidence expressed in an enthusiastic procession that bore them to the Tremont House where he was to open his senatorial campaign that evening. The cannon boomed while the concourse of people packed the streets around the speaker's balcony and jammed the windows and housetops. Seated comfortably with the

notables on the balcony, was his friend and opponent of many years, Abraham Lincoln.

Douglas' violent break with President Buchanan over a constitution for Kansas had changed the temper of the people of Illinois from one of distrust in 1854 to one of almost hero worship in 1858.

In his address he reviewed the important events of the preceding four years and his break with the administration. He was ready to fight the alliance of the Buchanan office holders and the Republican party by dealing with them as the Russians dealt with the Germans at Sebastopol. He would not stop to inquire whether his broadsides hit either a Buchananite or a Black Republican. He defended his Popular Sovereignty doctrine as a benefit to the people of the territories and he expected to be returned to the Senate on its merits. Lincoln's "House Divided" speech was political heresy and unsound. Douglas had learned through the experience of many forensic battles that his greatest strength lay in being the aggressor when dealing with an opponent; never before had he found this experience so valuable.

In his reply the following evening, Lincoln pursued the plan of attacking the theories and legislative practices of Douglas as he had done in 1854. He said that if the Buchanan office holders in Illinois felt more at home in the Republican camp than they did among the Douglas clan, he saw no reason why they should not be welcome, in fact he was rather glad that such a rift in Democratic ranks was taking place. Upon examination he had found that in the days of squatter sovereignty the people were permitted to govern themselves when living on the land of the United States Territories, while under the new program of Popular Sovereignty they were denied the right to regulate slavery.

As Lincoln followed Douglas from one speaking engage-



ment to another, the thought of a series of joint discussions must have appealed to him as a beneficial plan of strengthening his campaign, as we find him issuing a challenge to Douglas two weeks after their meeting in Chicago. The Judge, in his reply, after enumerating various excuses offered seven places of meeting, one each in the Congressional Districts where they had not spoken, and offered to confer at an early date on the mode and time of conducting them.

The Peoria *Daily Transcript* grasping the importance of such an event believed that Douglas' excuses would hardly relieve him of the suspicion that he feared so powerful an opponent while the Springfield *Illinois State Register* denied the sincerity of the Republican papers that entertained suspicions of their champion's courage.

Within the week Douglas offered a schedule of places and dates for the seven joint discussions with plans of procedure which gave him four openings and closings to Lincoln's three. Lincoln addressed his acceptance to Douglas on the following day and gave the information to the press.

### THE DEBATES

This contest, tearing at the very heart of slavery, opened in Ottawa on Saturday, August 21st with Douglas leading the discussion. In his opening speech he stressed the unanimity of thought of the Whig and Democratic parties prior to 1854. Neither had a boundary line dividing the North from the South nor a line dividing the Free and Slave States. Unity of thought prevailed in general, just a slight difference of opinion on banks, the tariff, distribution, the specie circular and the sub-treasury. They were in agreement on the great slavery question.

To solidify the national unity and carry out the principles endorsed by both parties in the Compromise of 1850, he introduced the "Kansas and Nebraska" bill with the



intent of — broadening the privileges of self-government in the national territories — by granting to the settlers the right to form and regulate their own domestic institutions as they pleased, subject only to the regulations of the Federal Constitution.

He accused Lincoln, the Whig, and Trumbull, the Democrat of forming a conspiracy in 1854 to liquidate the two old parties and merge them into a new Abolition party disguised under the name Republican. Under the arrangement Lincoln, pretending to be a good old line Whig, was to abolitionize the Whig party all over the state while Trumbull was to preach abolitionism in a homeopathic way to the Democrats and bring them "bound hand and foot into the Abolition camp."

A division of the spoils would replace James Shields with Lincoln as senator in 1854 and four years later Trumbull would take the place of Douglas. In the State Convention of Whigs in 1854 Lincoln was to transfer his Abolition converts from the Whig party to Giddings, Chase and Parson Lovejoy.

To prove this theory correct Douglas read Resolutions numbered 1, 2 and 3 from what he believed to be the proceedings of the State Republican Convention held in Springfield in October, 1854, for the purpose of welding into the new party the old line Whigs and the wayward Democrats.

Resolution number one provided for the dissolution of old party bonds and the formation of new ones to restore "the government to the true principles of the constitution."

Resolution number two provided for co-operation in a Republican party pledged to restore Kansas and Nebraska as territories free from slavery — to return to the states the power of extradition of slave labor — the abrogation of the Fugitive Slave law — the restriction of slavery to

the states where it already existed — to prohibit the admission of any more slave states — to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia — to exclude slavery from all the United States territories — and to resist the acquirement of any more territory practicing slavery.

Resolution number three provided for the accomplishment of these principles by withholding support from any candidate for either state or federal office who did not support them.

He then reduced the damaging parts of the three resolutions into seven leading questions which he asked Lincoln to either stand by or repudiate. He wanted them answered in Ottawa so that he could test him out near the slave state of Kentucky while in Jonesboro for their joint discussion. He claimed to have known Lincoln for nearly twenty-five years and had found many sympathetic points between them. They had both struggled with poverty in a strange land. He had taught school while Lincoln flourished as a grocery keeper in New Salem where he distinguished himself by ruining more liquor than all the other boys in town. He remembered Lincoln's opposition to the Mexican War, as a Congressman, because of the side he took with the common enemy of our country.

He paid his respects to Trumbull as a man who came into the world in Connecticut as a Federalist, moved to Georgia and became a nullifier; he wound up his business there by selling his clocks and moving to Illinois where he became a politician and a lawyer.

He charged that Trumbull had broken faith with Lincoln by withholding the few abolitionist votes needed for his election to the Senate, thus forcing Lincoln to either withdraw or stand for the election of a third party, so Lincoln withdrew.

Turning his attention to the "House Divided" speech, he could not understand why Lincoln would destroy the

house built by Washington, Franklin, Madison and their followers, which recognized both free and slave states and provided means for each state to make its own adjustments. He knew that at the time of this achievement which bound the thirteen discordant colonies into a Union of States, twelve of them were slave owning.

He questioned Lincoln's disagreement with the "Dred Scott" decision and suggested that his policy, if enacted, would make a free negro colony of the beautiful state of Illinois and give to the negro the right to vote and to hold office. If this was what the people of Illinois wanted, then they should support the Black Republicans. For his part, he believed that the country was made for white men and their posterity forever.

He closed this opening address amidst great applause by accusing the Black Republicans of trying to foment a sectional war so that one side would be destroyed.

#### LINCOLN'S REPLY

Lincoln faced the militant charges of Douglas with confused misgivings. It seemed that his almost infallible memory had taken a temporary leave of absence. He denied the Trumbull conspiracy and the double crossing of Shields for his seat in the Senate "because it was not true."

He said he was in court in Tazewell County at the time of the October 1854 Republican State Convention so could have had no part in it, he even refused to attend their meetings or have anything to do with their organization.

He quoted at length from his Peoria speech of 1854 to prove that he was not attacking slavery in the Slave States. He held that the Southern people were no more responsible for the existence of slavery than those of the North. It was a problem he did not know how to solve. To free them all and keep them among us, he felt would not bet-

ter their condition. A system of gradual emancipation possibly could be adopted. He acknowledged the constitutional right of the Slave States to hold the black man as property but he held that constitutional privilege did not give them the right to take them into free territories. He expressed the conviction that the negro was entitled to the rights and privileges enumerated in the Declaration of Independence. While they were not equal in color and intellectual endowment to the whites they did have the right to eat the food earned with their own hands without the consent of any other person.

The Judge was mistaken about his friend Lincoln being a "grocery keeper" as he never kept a grocery anywhere in the world but he did work in a little still-house at the head of a hollow late one winter.

He denied the charge of disloyalty as a Congressman during the Mexican War because he would not vote righteousness into the Democratic claims of the cause, but he did at all times vote the necessary supplies to maintain it and to pay the soldiers their salaries.

Douglas, in his criticism of the "House-Divided" doctrine did not say that the house could stand if divided.

Lincoln believed that Douglas held the Dred Scott decision to be a righteous doctrine of law that must be observed by all. He had set his teeth into it and could not be shaken loose. It was a strange situation to Lincoln to find Douglas asking the people to respect the laws of the land when he had been a party to the packing of the Supreme Court of Illinois for the purpose of wresting the power of that body from the Whig majority. And did he not profit by a judgeship appointment in payment for his labors? Why, the Judge "is spattered all over, from the beginning of his political life to the present time with attacks upon judicial decisions."

Lincoln took sharp issue with a clause in the Nebraska



bill that failed to restrict the slavery issue to the territories as it read that the "true intent and meaning of the bill (was) not to legislate slavery into any Territory or State." He was puzzled to know why the word "State" was included in the clause. "Judge Douglas knows. He put it there." But Lincoln thought it might be there to pave the way for another Dred Scott decision that would deny the states the right to exclude slavery.

The seven questions propounded by Douglas from what he called the Republican State Convention proceedings remained, as Lincoln promised, to be answered at Freeport.

The rebuttal of Douglas was started under extreme difficulty. The angry crowd created great confusion and had to be called to order by the Republican chairman. Douglas answered Lincoln's denial of service on the Republican Committee in 1854 as "a miserable quibble to avoid the main issue." He apparently believed that he held Lincoln in a trap from which he could not escape, and started making the greatest possible use of it.

Douglas reminded Lincoln that at the close of his Springfield speech in October, 1854, a Mr. Coddington had taken the stand and asked all Republicans present to retire from the Senate Chamber to the Republican State Convention then in session. This caused Lincoln to completely lose control of himself. In his anger, he stumbled around the platform asking the Judge to add that Lincoln had gone along with them. This the Judge refused to do as he did not know whether Lincoln had gone or not. Lincoln again interrupted saying that he knew he did not.

At this tense point, Republican committeemen seated on the speaker's platform jerked him away from the front of the stand and caused him to quit interfering with the speaker. Douglas, having succeeded in completely unbalancing his unusually level-headed opponent, continued to lash away at Lincoln and his followers. How little he knew



that the Springfield resolutions given to him by a close and trusted friend were bogus and would in the end ruin him more than he was now destroying Lincoln.

He chastised Lincoln so severely for not answering his seven questions that Lincoln interrupted a third time, but the interruption had scarcely passed his lips until Republican hands again pulled him to the back of the platform. Douglas, in this moment of triumph, believed that Lincoln was afraid to answer because his answers would destroy him down in "Egypt."

Flushed with the success he had gained in using the bogus resolutions, he turned to the Dred Scott decision charges with vengeance and accused Lincoln of not having character and integrity enough to assail the President and the nine Judges of the Supreme Court when he was without proof and facts and truth.

Judge Douglas' closing at Ottawa was his crowning triumph in the series of debates and it found Lincoln and his Republican cause at its lowest tide. The discussion had brought out in the open the principal issues to be discussed in the following meetings. The method of approach varied but the issues remained.

#### THE PRESS

The important newspapers of the country followed the debates with their ablest reporters. The *Philadelphia Press* observed that Douglas came as a great deliverer to beat back the tide of political tyranny and to establish the rights of the people to formulate their own laws. Lincoln writhed in the grasp of Douglas; his speech amounted to nothing.

From the *Boston Daily Advertiser* we learn that Mr. Lincoln was seized by the multitude and born off on the shoulders of 5,000 shouting Republicans led by a band of music. Judge Douglas, on his part, was cordially supported by his friends.

## FREEPORT

The thousands of political minded people from the villages and prairies of northern Illinois who poured into the streets of Freeport on Friday morning, August 27th, to participate in the second Lincoln and Douglas debate, found the flag-decorated city uncomfortably damp and chilly.

Courageous Republicans from great distances started arriving early to hear their champion of territorial freedom take the measure of the pompous Douglas and hew him down to the size they thought best suited a man of his understanding.

The news from the contest at Ottawa had cheered the Douglas Democrats and brought them out in great numbers to assist their crusader in trampling down the Black Republican chieftain who would make the negro their equal.

Lincoln opened with his answers to the questions put to him by Douglas at Ottawa. He read the questions slowly and in full, submitting his answer, then followed with a detailed explanation of each answer. With the questions disposed of to the satisfaction of the Republicans and the disgust of the Douglas Democrats, he proceeded to read a list of four questions he had prepared for Douglas to answer, promising more when he had them ready.

The first, third and fourth questions, like the seven proposed by Douglas at Ottawa, were principally for the benefit of argument in future debates. The second was a depth bomb timed to explode the future political ambitions of his opponent.

Question number one, dealt with the possibility of Kansas adopting a State Constitution and asking for admission into the Union under it before they had a population of 93,000 as provided by the English Bill. Lincoln wished to know if the Judge would support such an application.

Question number two, "Can the people of a United States Territory, in any lawful way, against the wish of any citizen of the United States, exclude slavery from its limits prior to the formation of a state constitution?"

As this question and its answer had a marked influence upon the future political life of both contestants as well as on the shaping of the destiny of the nation, we will turn to the answer at this point.

Douglas answered emphatically, "In my opinion the people of a Territory can, by lawful means, exclude slavery from their limits prior to the formation of a State constitution. . . . It matters not what way the Supreme Court may hereafter decide as to the abstract question whether slavery may or may not go into a Territory under the Constitution, the people have the lawful means to introduce it or exclude it as they please, for the reason that slavery cannot exist a day or an hour anywhere, unless it is supported by local police regulations."

This was similar to the view held by several Southern slavery politicians two years earlier, including Jefferson Davis, of Mississippi who later became the President of the Southern Confederacy, and Preston Brooks, of South Carolina who had beaten Charles Sumner. Lincoln believed and it must have been his motive in framing it, that an answer coming under the strained conditions existing at that time would anger the slave endorsing politicians of the south who once advocated it, and with the answer would come the destruction of Douglas in all the slave owning states. So around this question and answer, in a large measure, hangs the enduring history of this forensic contest.

Question number three wanted to know the position of Douglas, should the Supreme Court decree that states cannot exclude slavery from their limits.

Question number four, dealt with the possible securing

of additional territory either with or without slavery and the position Douglas would take in it.

Eager thousands saw the light of conquest flash from Lincoln's deep-set eyes as he seemed to change from a mortal melancholy man into a man transpired. Let's listen to him as he turns the Springfield Republican resolutions back on to Douglas. "I did not question the resolutions read by Douglas—I could not bring myself to suppose that Judge Douglas could say what he did upon this subject without knowing that it was true. Now, it turns out that he used the resolutions from some convention in Kane County and passed them off on Springfield. This discovery does not relieve me as I had just as much to do with the Convention in Kane County as that at Springfield. I am just as much responsible for one as for the other—the amount of responsibility being exactly nothing in either case; no more than there would be in regard to a set of resolutions passed in the moon. Judge Douglas with all the veracity at his command told you they were true."

The remaining five debates were in a large measure a rehearsal of the charges and rebuttals of the conflicting philosophies of the first two. Lincoln became slightly disturbed, and for the last time, at Jonesboro. Otherwise, he yielded no ground to Douglas. At Charleston, the home of his step-mother, he was fully equal to his opponent, giving as much as he took of the argument.

Cold and windblown Galesburg brought out the largest crowd of the seven meeting places. Here Lincoln accused Douglas of failing to check the 1854 Springfield resolutions, as he had promised to do at Freeport. He compared Douglas' use of these resolutions to the fisherman's wife whose drowned husband was brought home with his body full of eels. The wife, on viewing the remains, thought it best to remove the eels and set him again. So it was with Douglas who removed the eels from the Springfield Con-



vention at Ottawa and expected to *use* the fraud over again in each of the following debates as Douglas complained he could not induce Lincoln to maintain the same standard and carry the same flag in all parts of the state.

Quincy differed little from Galesburg except for the tired and worn appearance of Douglas. At Alton, the seventh and last of the debates, Lincoln seemed even fresher and more alert than he did at Ottawa, while Douglas was so tired and worn that he could scarcely raise his voice above a whisper.

The seven debates offer only a small part of the struggle of the campaign. Each contestant spoke some sixty times between the opening of the campaign in Chicago early in July and election day in November. Illinois was the Nation's slavery battleground in 1858 with the country, North and South, watching and weighing every movement. The youthful politicians, meeting as adversaries for the first time in the State House of Illinois in 1834, were now among America's foremost statesmen. Douglas had reached the zenith of his political power as Kansas started bleeding from wounds inflicted by the border ruffians who moved in under the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Lincoln had risen slowly and surely from country thoughts and actions to a commanding position in the new and untried Republican party.

Douglas reached the peak of his forensic skill and cunning in the first debate. His blind seizure upon the bogus resolutions and his lashing of Lincoln into anger and interruption, haunted him until election day when the will of the people gave Lincoln a majority of over four thousand votes, but sent to Springfield a majority of democratic legislators, who, the following winter, returned Douglas to the Senate.

Lincoln was never weaker than in the first debate at Ottawa. Swift moving Douglas had confounded him with



the bogus resolutions and, Lincoln, in his confusion, failed to recognize the error. Lincoln took command at Freeport, did well to hold his own in slavery-sympathetic Jonesboro and Charleston, repulsed the Douglas onslaught at Galesburg with heavy losses to his opponent, led the territorial freedom charge at Quincy, and at Alton made the supreme address of the series, his most statesmanlike utterance since Peoria, four years before.

In 1820, a compromise restored sufficient order in this slavery troubled nation to last for thirty years. Another in 1850 found new forces mingling with the old in the forum of the Senate; one of whom, urged onward by political ambition, was within four years to destroy all the peaceful benefits of both.

It has been our country's fortune to bring forth a commanding figure at the moment of its greatest danger, endowed with sufficient wisdom to keep our nation bound together. This is the greatest contribution Douglas made to the land which gave to him a political preferment he abused in climbing a faulty ladder toward official fame, for he forced his adopted State to send forth another adopted son to torment him in the contest of 1858, armed with humility and a love for mankind that he placed above man-made ambitions.

This titanic struggle, the most important in our country's story, was the volcanic eruption of fermenting political philosophies that were rapidly dividing the nation founded by the historic convention of 1787. The privilege of all the American people to live free and with equal opportunities as settlers and tillers of the soil had been placed clearly before the people of the last stronghold of slavery upon this earth.

In this contest, Douglas lost the friendship of the slave oligarchy in his drive to return to the Senate and with it

went his chances to live in the great white home of the Chief Executive.

The lonely, melancholy man of the western prairies, who came into this troubled world among the slaves had spread his name into every voting precinct. His was a new voice in the national forum of destiny, speaking out for the bondsmen of our country and the perpetuity of a Union of States where all should eat the bread their toil had earned. His vision passed the Senate chamber in his drive for political position and looked into the homes of millions who believed that all mankind should be free. The people's eyes looked to the mansion in Washington as a future home for the friend of man.



## LINCOLN THE PRESIDENT





## TWO HOURS AND TWO MINUTES

or

LINCOLN AND EVERETT AT GETTYSBURG

BEVERLY W. HOWE \*

At Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on July 1, 2 and 3, 1863, there was fought a bitterly contested battle generally regarded as the turning point of the Civil War. General Lee's magnificent army of Northern Virginia, numbering about 70,000, was defeated by the Federal Army of the Potomac, commanded by General George G. Meade. The official estimate of the Union loss of men is 23,003, of the Confederate 20,451, including at least 2,500 of dead on each side. For the burial of the Union Soldiers who fell in the battle, a National Cemetery was soon planned and built on Cemetery Ridge in or close to the little town of Gettysburg. Judge Wills was designated by the Governor of Pennsylvania to act for him in the matter and the Governors of the other Union States appointed representatives who co-operated with Mr. Wills. They decided that the ground should be dedicated with imposing ceremonies. It came about then that on November 19, 1863, two great addresses, quite different in style and other characteristics, were delivered by two great men of different types who were also truly great orators of different schools of oratory.

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\* Beverly W. Howe, deceased, was a lawyer, lecturer and traveler of Chicago. Among his writings was one book: *Abraham Lincoln in Great Britain*.



It was the most natural thing for the committee to select as the orator of the day Edward Everett who was then regarded as the foremost orator in America. They set the date for the dedication as October 23, 1863, and sent an invitation to Mr. Everett some time in September. He notified them that owing to other engagements he would not have time adequately to prepare for such an occasion by that date but would be glad to accept if they would postpone the date so as to give him plenty of time to prepare. Accordingly the date was set for November 19, 1863, and Mr. Everett accepted. Before we go further we want to know more about this man Everett who was selected above all other speakers for this occasion and was so greatly desired that they postponed the date first fixed in order that he could be there.

Edward Everett was born on April 11, 1794, and was at this time in his seventieth year. He was born in Massachusetts and educated at Harvard where he had achieved boyish distinction as a poet and speaker. Graduating before he was eighteen, he entered the ministry and immediately became greatly in demand as a pulpit orator. Soon, however, he accepted an offer to become professor of Greek literature at Harvard, but entered on his duties only after extensive travel and study in Europe at the expense of the University. After a few years of successful work at Harvard, he entered politics and was elected to Congress, where he served for ten years. Then he was elected Governor of Massachusetts, serving four terms, finally being defeated by only one vote. Following this he went on another European travel tour which was interrupted by his being appointed Minister to the Court of St. James, where he served for several years with great satisfaction, both to the British and to Americans.

Returning to this country, he was elected President of Harvard University. After a few years at this task, hardly

relished by him, he was named, upon the death of his long time intimate friend, Daniel Webster, to succeed Webster as Secretary of State in President Fillmore's Cabinet. This was a national, and, indeed, an international distinction in itself — not only to be Secretary of State, but to succeed Webster in that position. Before leaving the Department of State he was elected to the United States Senate. He retired a year later to spend the remainder of his days in literary pursuits. In 1860 Everett was nominated for Vice-President by the Constitutional Union party and with John Bell, of Tennessee, as the candidate for President, ran against Lincoln, receiving 39 electoral votes. Such is a brief outline of the distinguished career of the man who most of us probably know merely as the man who delivered the two-hour address at Gettysburg when Lincoln delivered his immortal two-minute address of only 267 words.

Along with Webster, Everett was one of the greatest orators of his generation, and stands with Webster close to the top of a list of the ten or twelve outstanding American orators of all time. His name would very likely appear on any list intelligently selected of the fifteen or twenty of the world's all-time leading orators. It has been said of him that "as an orator for special occasions 'he had no rival near the throne, with the single exception of Daniel Webster'." He had delivered memorable orations on notable occasions, both in this country and abroad. Only a few years previous to the time of the Gettysburg dedication he had prepared and delivered in various parts of the country more than 125 times a great lecture on George Washington, the proceeds from which lecture had been contributed by him to the fund which helped make Mt. Vernon public property.

This man Everett, of course, prepared elaborately for his effort at Gettysburg which, in many ways, was to be,

and, in fact, was a crowning climax of his long and eventful career. When he arose to speak, he laid his lengthy manuscript on the table. He did not refer to it once, however. It is said that he always did this when delivering addresses. Each time he delivered his lecture on Washington he had his manuscript on the table, but never looked at it. He wanted his audience to realize that he had considered the occasion important enough to prepare thoroughly for it. He did not come before his audience with any apology about not being prepared.

Like many of our greatest orators, he used long sentences very frequently. This was one of his outstanding characteristics, as it was also of Webster, his intimate friend and contemporary. William Maxwell Evarts, a great lawyer and statesman and a great orator, who, among other distinctions, was Secretary of State under Hayes, on one occasion defended ably the long sentence. In an interesting biographical sketch of him, his son relates this incident. He said his "father's style of speech was long and pithy, driving on a whole flock of several clauses, before he came to the close of a sentence; so that when the copiousness of his style met not with proportionable capacity in his auditors, it was unjustly censured for 'perplexed, tedious and obscure'."

"Let us record here," he continued, "the witty retort of Mr. Evarts to one who, in good natured banter, had twitted him on his long sentences. In 1879, being then Secretary of State, he presided at the public dinner in New York tendered to Mr. Thomas Bailey Potter, one of the few members of parliament who had been, in England, staunch supporters of the Northern side during the Civil War. Mr. Samuel I. Babcock, then president of the New York Chamber of Commerce, in closing his speech at the dinner, had thus expressed himself: 'Let us hope, gentlemen, that if differences should arise in the future between

Great Britain and the United States, men will be found like Mr. Potter and Secretary Evarts, who, after a calm and dispassionate discussion, clothed though it be with sentences as long as the English language can supply, will arrive at an amicable settlement.' Mr. Evarts, on rising to introduce the next speaker, began by saying that English was a language the true efficacy of which the gentleman who sat down did not seem to appreciate. Not only was it fine in quality but in quantity it was absolutely marvelous. What wonder, then, that a public servant should try to check the volubility of his countrymen by consuming large portions of it himself. He then added: 'I don't wish that our guest should carry away with him a wrong impression in regard to this alleged fault. The only persons in this country who are opposed to long sentences are the criminal classes'."

Mr. Everett would have concurred in Mr. Evart's statement. He knew the magic of verbiage. He was what many would now call a long-winded speaker. Some one has said that much energy may be saved by remembering that when a long-winded talker is telling a story it is not necessary really to start listening until he begins making gestures. Another wit has said public speaking is the art of diluting a two-minute idea with a two-hour vocabulary. But these wise-cracks do not apply to Dr. Everett's address at Gettysburg. It was not too long. It would not have been acceptable if it had not been as long as it was — two hours. In that period of our history for such an occasion that was the appropriate length of the address of the day. His oration was planned along classical lines, as would be expected of a man of his education, experience and training and was delivered with poise, grace and effectiveness. He reviewed at some length the maneuvers of the two armies just previous to July 1st and then gave a graphic picture of the battle, or battles as he called them, from



beginning to end. Then he indulged in a discussion of the causes of the war and the issues for which the Union Armies were fighting and ended, of course, with a tribute to those who had given up their lives for the Union cause. As I have referred to his use frequently of the long sentence, I would like, in this connection, to quote one of his very expressive short sentences. As a climax to his tribute to the dead soldiers, he said: "Would that the heartfelt tribute could penetrate these honored graves."

As the day for the dedication ceremonies approached one of the committee in charge suggested that possibly the President should be invited to make a few remarks. With cabinet members and other governmental dignitaries, the President had received an invitation to attend and had accepted. When the President's acceptance was received, this member of the committee expressed the thought that he ought to be asked to speak. Accordingly, about two weeks before the date for the meeting, in the name of the Governors of the States, President Lincoln was invited to speak and the invitation was "to set apart formally these grounds to their sacred use by a few appropriate remarks." Mr. Lincoln accepted and agreed to make the "few appropriate remarks" so definitely specified.

We need not here mention who Abraham Lincoln was, or recount his history previous to this occasion. He was chosen to make these "few appropriate remarks" because he was President of the United States, not because he was one of the greatest orators of that period. He was, however, a great orator, although his reputation in that field was not as extensive as that of Dr. Everett and his fame then did not, and now does not, rest to such a great extent upon his ability as a speaker as Dr. Everett's did then and does now.

Previous to this time in addition to his debates with Douglas and other political addresses, which had brought



him fame and favor, he had delivered such really great addresses as the Cooper Union Speech and the "Divided House" Speech and the Farewell Address to his friends and neighbors at Springfield on leaving for Washington to be inaugurated President. He knew how to prepare a speech. He did not prepare the Gettysburg Address hastily on the train which carried him from Washington to Gettysburg, and has been many times erroneously asserted. He worked on it some en route, to be sure, but his preparation was by no means confined to that period of time.

Like many another great orator, he began preparing for a career of public speaking as a mere lad. In his book, entitled *Abe Lincoln, Kentucky Boy*, page 116, Raymond Warren tells an interesting incident which proves this statement. Mr. Warren says:

After Abraham Lincoln's death, old Dennis Hanks, in recalling incidents in his illustrious cousin's boyhood, said: "I'll tell you a peculiar circumstance about Abe. Back in Kentucky he would come home from church and put a box in the middle of the cabin floor and repeat the sermon clean through from text to doxology or sometimes give it outdoors, usin' a stump for a pulpit. I heerd him do it many a time."

Lincoln began his preparation of the Gettysburg Speech immediately after receiving the invitation to attend the dedication and kept it up until long after the address had been delivered. I cannot prove these statements by living witnesses or documentary evidence, but I believe them to be true. They are true of all good speeches, addresses or sermons. Every good sermon you hear has been in the making a long time. Of course every sermon is not good, though it may be preached by a good man. Not so many years ago I heard a sermon by a good man, but it was not a good sermon, though it had most commendable terminal facilities. I was visiting in a small town and went to church on Sunday. The telling of this incident is no reflection

on the small town. All poor sermons are not preached in the small towns, nor all good ones in the big cities. I squared myself, as it were, to listen to this pastor as he took his text and started his address; but I could not gather from what he said what he was driving at, and I do not think he or even God Himself knew what point or points he was making. Now there was a clock in the court house tower in this town which could be heard all over the town when it struck the hours. All of a sudden, after I had been laboring with this man's remarks for twenty or thirty minutes, I heard the town clock strike twelve. Upon the twelfth stroke he suddenly closed the Bible and said, "There's twelve o'clock, let's go home and eat dinner."

Remarkable terminal facilities to be sure! And while the authorities all condemn an abrupt conclusion of an address I did not hear any objections to that part of this sermon. That good brother had not prepared his sermon — he was just talking until the clock struck twelve.

Yes, Lincoln began preparing as soon as he accepted the invitation to speak, if not sooner, when he knew he would attend and might therefore be called upon in view of his position. He may not until sometime thereafter have actually put down on paper any of his thoughts but he was accumulating ideas to become a part of his written memorandum or manuscript later. Possibly while he was working on something else or listening to an address or reading a book or paper, he would see or hear something that he would think might fit into his "few appropriate remarks" to be made at Gettysburg. It is possible that many a time in church on Sunday a good speech is mentally prepared for a banquet the following Saturday night by some man in the congregation, who appears to the preacher and choir to be paying strict attention to the sermon. And by the same token it is logical to believe that many a preacher, while attending a banquet on some week night, inspired

and enthused by some thought advanced or words and phrases expressed by the speaker or speakers, takes home the material if not some of the sentences and paragraphs for his sermon the next Sunday or some other Sunday to follow.

Lincoln kept up his preparation of the speech too, until long after it had been delivered. He was human enough to have thought of some things after the speech had been delivered which he wished he had said. He rewrote the final manuscript of his Gettysburg Speech many days after it had been delivered and stenographic reports of it had been published, in order that posterity might read in it some things which had come to his mind after it had been delivered.

Now, briefly, let me give you some of the known facts about the preparation of the address. An advance copy of Dr. Everett's address which had been prepared, ready for the printers, long before the time of its delivery, had been sent to Mr. Lincoln soon after he had accepted the invitation to speak. He had read it and used it in his preparation for the occasion. On Sunday, November 15, while at a photograph gallery with some other men, having a picture taken, the President had the proof sheets of Everett's address and some paper on which evidently he had been making memoranda for his own address. Doubtless he worked on it on the train en route to Gettysburg on the eighteenth, but it appears that at least a rough draft of it had been finished previous to this time. That night at the home of Judge Wills, chairman of the committee in charge of the dedication and in whose home Lincoln was entertained while in Gettysburg, the President was working again on his address and took his manuscript to an adjoining home where Secretary of State Wm. H. Seward was staying for the night, in order that he might confer with Seward about it. The speech, according to Dr. Wil-

liam E. Barton, who in one of his books has marshalled the facts in a convincing manner, was written six times at least, by Lincoln in his own hand. Five of the autographs are still available and an official printing of the one missing manuscript is yet on hand. The first, it appears, was written mainly in Washington before Lincoln left for Gettysburg; the second in the house of Judge Wills on the morning of the day the address was delivered; the third was written a few days later for use in the printed report; the fourth was written later at the request of Dr. Everett; the fifth and the sixth were prepared by request for use in publications. There are slight variations in all of these as well as variations between these and the stenographic reports of the address.

The sixth, according to Dr. Barton, was written by Lincoln when he knew it was to be preserved in a volume with somewhat wide circulation and is as nearly as it could then be made what he wished he had said. It is the version which now and for many years has been used in books and everywhere in print. When delivering the address Mr. Lincoln had the manuscript in his hand — probably the second of the autographs now extant — but he did not read it, even if he looked at it at all. It is certain that he made changes in the phraseology while speaking, interpolating some words. The most notable of the interpolations were the words, “under God” in the clause “that this nation under God, shall have a new birth of freedom.” The words “under God” do not appear in the first or second drafts, but appear in all the other drafts and in some of the stenographic reports published in the newspapers.

It is a wonderful short address, consisting of only 267 words and required less than three minutes to deliver.

In an article by George Ade, printed on the back cover of *Readers' Digest* for February, 1934, entitled “What's the Use of Useless Words?,” he made some comments



which are of great interest in this connection. The following, including the first paragraph properly to introduce the second for our purposes, is quoted from the article:

"Before the typewriter came it was not easy for writers to be verbose. Mr. Dana's *Sun* rated brevity as a cardinal virtue and was the textbook of journalism. Every good reporter did his own copy-cutting. Death to stereotyped adjectives! Save the superlatives for a nobler occasion. These were Spartan rules, much like the rules which have made *The Readers' Digest* a privilege and a delight."

"I wonder how Guy de Maupassant would have made out with a dandy little portable? Solomon did pretty well with his Song of Songs, even if he couldn't click off a thousand words an hour. Lincoln never could have composed his Address at Gettysburg on a machine. The masterpieces were done by hand."

As Mr. Lincoln's address was so short, rather than to attempt to tell here the substance of it, I will repeat it in full. Many people have memorized it, either in school days or since, and know it as well as they do the Lord's Prayer. But sometimes it is violent to assume even that people know the Lord's Prayer. You many remember the story about the two tramps who got into an argument as to which one of them knew the most about the Bible. One offered to bet the other a quarter that he could repeat the Lord's Prayer. The other fellow took him up and they put up the quarters and the first tramp started in to repeat the Lord's Prayer as follows: "Now I lay me down to sleep. . . ." The other interrupted, saying: "That's all right, I am convinced you know it. Take the money."

In print, Mr. Lincoln's address cannot give readers the thrill I have received, on Lincoln's birthday several times at the programs given by the G. A. R., in their headquar-



ters at the Public Library in Chicago, where "Comrade" Beam, now deceased, the Chaplain of the post, in accordance with a custom which I understand has been prevalent at these meetings for many years, recited Mr. Lincoln's address. "Comrade" Beam, of course, a veteran of the war, over 80 years old, dressed in his uniform of blue thrilled me as I am sure he did every one in the audience by his impressive recitation of this wonderful address. Another excellent recitation of it which I heard and shall never forget, was given a few years ago by the famous English actor, Charles Laughton, in "Ruggles of Red Gap." The address is as follows:

Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

The "few appropriate remarks" have been considered a literary as well as an oratorical gem. Lord Curzon, Chancellor of University of Oxford, in an address on November 6, 1913, referred to this address and Lincoln's second Inaugural Address as being along with the toast of William Pitt after the victory at Trafalgar, the three "Supreme Masterpieces" of English eloquence.

It will be interesting to note some of the observations of those present at the dedication regarding these speeches. Some of the audience referred to Lincoln's address as "the few remarks" with which the President followed "the eloquent address" of Edward Everett. The edition of Harper's *Weekly*, in the issue of December 15, 1863, said — "The oration by Mr. Everett was smooth and cold. . . . The few words of the President were from the heart to the heart." In this connection I cannot refrain from repeating one contrast between the two addresses in addition to that of the length of the one and the brevity of the other. In Everett's oration there appears an effort to blame the seceding states and to hurl defiance at the driven-back foe! There appears also some resentment toward the Confederate leaders. But in Lincoln's "few appropriate remarks" there is no hate, no bitterness, no attempt to rouse passion. His magnanimity would not permit him to entertain such thoughts. As has been well said by Dr. Barton, "There is no apparent effort to keep these elements out of the speech; they are not in the address because they were not in the heart of Lincoln."

It is recorded that while the people had not thought of him as a native of Kentucky, Lincoln's pronounciation betrayed his origin. Speaking very slowly he tended to magnify his native intonation, according to Dr. Barton. To my knowledge native Kentuckians gone from Kentucky as long as twenty-seven years still have strangers, hearing them talk, surprise them by asking what part of Kentucky

they came from. One would suppose, however, that leaving Kentucky as a boy Lincoln by 1863, when he was fifty-four years old, would not have exhibited to the extent reported the Kentucky drawl. That he did is additional evidence that Marse Henry Watterson was correct when he said, "Once a Kentuckian always a Kentuckian," whether it refers to a Kentuckian in spirit or in appearance and action.

Another interesting impression recorded of people who were present is that Lincoln stopped speaking just as they thought he was beginning. They thought he had hardly made a speech. Afterwards some of them told of *hearing* Everett and *seeing* Lincoln.

As is so well known, one of Lincoln's greatest characteristics was his ability as a story teller. In many of his speeches he used a yarn or incident with effect. But he did not tell a single incident in the Gettysburg Address. It would not serve his purpose at the time. In as few words as possible, he was stating what he believed the occasion required.

In "Essays and Observations," by Lord Hewart, Lord Chief Justice of England, there is an excellent chapter on "Modern Oratory." In one place, he says: "Although it is easy to contemplate modern oratory without enthusiasm, it does seem perhaps to exhibit one encouraging feature. As it grows more and more modern, it tends more to plain speech than did, for example, the rounded periods of early Victorian and late Georgian oratory. To disdain all ornament needs, to be sure, great courage. Only a perfect figure, it is said, can venture to go naked. But *nuda veritas* is irresistible."

Although Lincoln's Gettysburg Speech was delivered long before this essay was written, his address comes well within this definition of modern oratory. It is a perfect figure unadorned. It is *nuda veritas*. It is irresistible.

In praising the one of these addresses, however, we must not belittle the other. In remembering Lincoln at Gettysburg, let us not forget Everett was there, too. As Lincoln's was an ideal short address, Everett's was a model of the long address of early Victorian and late Georgian variety referred to by the Lord Chief Justice.

Lincoln and Everett each had his assignment to perform at Gettysburg and both were entitled to receipts in full for service performed satisfactorily in the superlative degree. What the one did the other could not have done, but both together could not have been excelled doubtless by any two men who might have been selected. Each recognized the excellence of the other's performance. The President congratulated Everett, and Everett complimented the President on the platform there immediately after the addresses were finished. On the following day Dr. Everett wrote Mr. Lincoln a letter in which, among other things, he said: "Permit me also to express my great admiration of the thoughts expressed by you with such eloquent simplicity and appropriateness at the consecration of the cemetery. I should be glad if I could flatter myself that I came as near to the central idea of the occasion in two hours as you did in two minutes."

Mr. Lincoln told one of his intimates that he never received a compliment he prized more highly than that contained in the letter from Edward Everett. In reply Lincoln wrote:

"Your kind note of today is received. In our respective parts yesterday, you could not have been excused to make a short address, nor I a long one. I am pleased to know that, in your judgment, the little I did say was not entirely a failure.

"Of course, I knew Mr. Everett would not fail, and yet, while the whole discourse was eminently satisfactory, and



will be of great value, there were passages in it which transcended my expectations."

Thus we see that each orator at Gettysburg, himself well able to judge, pronounced the effort of the other excellent and satisfactory. As no good speaker ever is, neither was entirely satisfied with the results of his own efforts. Many, however, of those who were present and heard what they said, knew and those of us who may read now the text of each speech as revised by the speaker before or after the event know that on a great occasion, after adequate preparation, there were delivered by two great orators, two truly great Gettysburg Addresses, in duration, respectively, Two Hours and Two Minutes.





## THE INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS OF LINCOLN'S LIFE

MARSHALL SOLBERG \*

Abraham Lincoln condemned the Mexican War. He and some other sixteen or seventeen Whigs in Congress, headed by John Quincy Adams, felt that our country was the aggressor, and that indeed is the verdict of history. The war on Mexico made something of a farce of the Monroe Doctrine, but after our country was launched into the War, Lincoln did not obstruct the administration in its path to victory.

Lincoln's stand with respect to the Mexican War was a forerunner of the stand of Carl Schurz, one of his most powerful backers in his campaign for the Presidency in 1860. Carl Schurz was one of the "forty-eighters," a group of as loyal and patriotic Americans as ever dwelt in our midst. After fighting for freedom in his homeland, Germany, and failing, he emigrated to the United States in 1852. Upon Lincoln's induction into office, Carl Schurz was appointed Minister to Spain. He delayed taking up the ministerial duties until the Civil War opened when he entered the Union Army, and was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and later to that of Major General. This man was able to rise above party lines on domestic

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issues in the national campaign of 1884, as well as above national lines, as he demonstrated in his youth when he fought for freedom. When Stephen Decatur's toast: "Our country! In her intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong," was called to the attention of Carl Schurz, he commented: "Our country right or wrong. When right, to be kept right; when wrong, to be put right."

The Democratic and Republican Party platforms of 1860 and 1864 made little reference to foreign affairs. In 1860 the only plank regarding international matters was in the Democratic platform. It suggested that our country acquire Cuba on terms honorable to ourselves as well as just to Spain. Apparently this was a follow-up of the Ostend Manifesto of six years before.

From this it appears that the political leaders in both of the major parties in Lincoln's day made no attempt to set their nominees, if successful, in a vice-like program or policy.

Many partisan self-seekers and demagogues have urged us for twenty years or more to follow the policies of Washington and Lincoln in international as well as domestic affairs, but what were their policies in international affairs, except to meet and deal with situations as they arose in the progress of events.

As James Russell Lowell said, "Lincoln's policy or program was purely tentative," or elastic, and Lincoln had no cast iron theorem with which to deal with all problems. Lowell also said that time was Lincoln's prime minister.

In the political platforms of 1864, the only reference to international matters is found in the Republican platform, where an objection was registered without naming the guilty nation, to the situation in Mexico. At this juncture it would be well for us to recall that Great Britain, Spain, and France had made a pact whereby Mexico was to be

obliged to live up to certain of its international undertakings. This was proper under the law of nations. Troops of the allied powers entered Mexico — occupied Vera Cruz. When Great Britain and Spain ascertained that it was the purpose of the French Emperor, Napoleon III, to upset the Republic of Mexico and to place the Archduke Maximilian of Austria on the Mexican throne, Great Britain and Spain withdrew from the pact.

The foundation for the *Alabama* claims arose in the Civil War and during Lincoln's presidency, but were not disposed of until 1871 and by virtue of an arbitration agreement entered into between this country and Great Britain. Therefore, these claims have very little to do with Lincoln's protests regarding the depredations committed by the *Alabama* and other sea raiders that were outfitted in Great Britain and preyed upon Union commerce on the high seas during the Civil War. Nevertheless, certain Anglophobes have used the "*Alabama* claims" and the British attitude of friendship toward the South as indicative of British hostility to our country during the entire Civil War period. However, when Great Britain perceived that slavery, which it had eliminated from its colonies a generation before the Civil War, was the underlying cause or motive of secession and after the British people had heard that great preacher of freedom, Henry Ward Beecher, advocate the cause of the Union at great mass meetings, British sentiment became more favorable to the cause of the North. There were, however, other factors in this change in British public opinion, as we shall see later.

Before launching into a review of the *Trent* affair, let us mention some of the great figures that were contemporaries of Abraham Lincoln. Almost invariably when we think of Lincoln, we also think of Washington. "Comparisons are odious" has been glibly said and repeated, and accepted by most of us, probably. And yet it is utterly

untrue, for in almost every moment of our waking day we are making comparisons between this and that, present and the past, between persons and persons, places and places, incidents and incidents, and so on. Indeed, comparison is a part of our logical processes, i.e., the process of ratiocination.

We Americans, in contrasting or comparing Washington and Lincoln, do no injustice to either. Indeed, we are thus better enabled to understand and appreciate these great towering human figures.

But almost invariably we fail to look around us and to see what is going on and who were the leaders in other lands. It would not be very greatly to our credit if we produced men that were merely great in comparison to small men. We should realize that Lincoln loomed up to the highest point in history's eye, notwithstanding greatness of his contemporaries. If I were to take a text for this talk of mine, it would be "There were Giants on the Earth in the Nineteenth Century." Aside from the great scientists and authors of Great Britain's bright and glorious Victorian days, there were then living, Mazzini, Cavour, and Garibaldi in Italy. Garibaldi fought for freedom in this hemisphere as well as in Italy. In France there was Louis Napoleon, who carried on successfully the war against Austria, which relieved the Italian states from the Austrian yoke. In alliance with other powers, his country brought the Crimean War to a successful conclusion, and by his help Baron Haussmann made Paris one of the most attractive cities in the world. In Austria, Prince Metternich long held the reins of government and suppressed rebellions in various parts of Europe, functioning generally under the spirit of the Holy Alliance. Indeed, Napoleon the Great died when Lincoln was twelve years of age. And in Germany, Bismarck rose to power and was praised as the most powerful and successful European



statesman of the Nineteenth Century. In Great Britain we see that Palmerston, Gladstone, Disraeli, Peel, Bright, and Cobden played the great game of statecraft. In South America, we read of the great work of liberation carried on by Bolivar and Juárez. It means something to our American hearts to realize that Abraham Lincoln held his own and more too with these giants among men.

Now we come to the *Trent* affair, which nearly brought Great Britain into the war against the North. Luckily Anglophobes were not numerous or influential enough in Lincoln's day to frustrate efforts to palliate Great Britain. He escaped the obstructionist tactics of such groups that later beset and belabored several other presidents.

Let us bear in mind that it was not a Confederate States' vessel that was stopped by our warship, the *San Jacinto*. A small confederate boat or blockade runner had slipped out of the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina, on a dark night in the autumn of 1861, bound for Cuba. It had on board Commissioners Mason and Slidell and their relatives and attendants. They arrived at Havana, Cuba. The British steamer *Trent* took the party from Cuba. When it got out to sea, it was intercepted by the *San Jacinto* — Captain Charles Wilkes commanding. A boarding party made demand of the British captain that he show his passenger list. He refused to do this, claiming that it was a violation of the rights of a neutral. Thereupon, the envoys, Mason and Slidell, in order to avoid a clash, and perhaps bloodshed, surrendered themselves and were taken on board the *San Jacinto* and brought into a northern port. These Commissioners, as they are called in our school book histories, were envoys bound for Great Britain and France, respectively.

When the *Trent* reached England there was a great furor. Since Great Britain, for economic reasons particularly in the Lancashire cotton district, was favorable to



the South, there were Britons who were willing and anxious to go to war. The Trans-Atlantic cable, though laid in 1858, was then out of commission and there was no way for our State Department to send an apology before the arrival of the *Trent*.

The excitement in France was much less than in Great Britain. Fortunately we had a representative in France at the time, John Bigelow, who handled the situation very capably, notwithstanding that he occupied a minor diplomatic position, that of American Consul in Paris. His work in this connection was perhaps more effective than was that of our very highly rated Minister to the Court of St. James, Charles Francis Adams, or his son, Henry Adams, who worked with him at the time. Bigelow drafted a letter to the press in which he asked that judgment be withheld until after the lapse of sufficient time to hear from his country. General Winfield Scott was in Paris at the time and passed on Bigelow's letter and, although noted as a deep student and critic of English, approved it without change. Bigelow's letter was published in the French newspapers and was immediately sent across the Channel to England and published in the British newspapers.

We Americans should recall and thankfully remember that at this critical time, as well as in other crises in the relations between the United States and Great Britain, we had friends at Court. In this instance, they happened to be John Bright, a Quaker, the greatest orator and debater in the House of Commons, and Richard Cobden, one of the greatest of political economists. Two prominent newspapers in England sided with John Bright. Sane and sound counsel prevailed.

Meanwhile, on this side of the Atlantic, the administration ordered the surrender of Messrs. Mason and Slidell, so that they might proceed on their mission. Seward, Secretary of State, apologized for the unlawful detention of

the *Trent* and the violation of the rights of a neutral ship sailing under a neutral flag, but in quite a dubious way so as to cater to American public opinion.

Charles Sumner labored long and assiduously in the attempt to convince Lincoln of the validity of the British claim, and Lincoln did not make up his mind until after mature and deliberate consideration of the situation. But once having made up his mind, he adhered to it with firmness and conviction. He realized that the deed of Captain Wilkes was wrong. He also knew that our country had always been most jealous of the rights of neutral flags and had always claimed freedom of the seas, and waged the War of 1812 against Great Britain in order to preserve that very claim. We refused to ratify a treaty negotiated by Great Britain with France, Austria, Prussia and Russia, designed to suppress the slave traffic on the high seas. We refused to permit search of any vessel carrying aloft the American flag by the war vessels of any of the other signatories to the pact, notwithstanding the fact that our constitution provided that slave traffic should not be carried on after 1808. In all probability, Lincoln's free and frank way of admitting an error had much to do with the turning of British public sentiment away from the South towards the North.

There is nothing in Lincoln's deeds or writings that indicate that he was selfish, colloquial, provincial, or isolationist. Certainly, this humble man of the soil and sod, this Prince of God, who dwelt so much on "Oh! Why should the spirit of mortal be proud," had nothing in him of the "holier than thou" attitude. The jingo and isolationist, who would claim him for their side, can point to no act or deed or utterance of his that indicates that he was an isolationist. Yet he and Washington have been woefully misinterpreted and misrepresented, in this phase of their work.

Lincoln believed in national responsibility in international affairs, and like Washington, that the God of men is also the God of nations, and that nations, like men, are held accountable for their actions. This is the purport of his second inaugural, as well as Washington's Farewell Address to the American people.

Indicative of this lofty conception is the following excerpt from Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address:

"Fondly do we hope — fervently do we pray — that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsmen's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.' "

And then Lincoln closed with this deeply reverential expression. "With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations."



## THE GROWTH AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE ESTATE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN, 1861-1868

HARRY E. PRATT \*

Late on the Saturday before his departure for Washington, on the following Monday to become President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln stepped into the Springfield Marine and Fire Insurance Company. Eight years before he had begun his banking business with the company and now he had come for the last time. He drew a check for \$400 on his account, taking \$100 in cash and the remainder in three equal drafts on the Metropolitan Bank of New York.

The cashier of the Marine and Fire Insurance Company was Robert Irwin, known to Lincoln since 1834 when Irwin had opened a general store in Springfield. For some years before the organization of the Marine and Fire Insurance Company Lincoln had left his savings on deposit in Irwin's store. Lincoln handed Irwin his notes and mortgages and asked him to act as his agent in the collection of the interest and principal as it came due, and to hold the money until he called for it.

Lincoln appears to have paid little attention to the collection of the notes, the money as collected being deposited

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to his account, with the exception of \$4,500 which he authorized Irwin to withdraw for his personal use. Lincoln received no interest on the deposit and the loan to Irwin was without interest, probably to repay him for his services in making the collections.

Irwin receipted on the memorandum for the notes and mortgages turned over to him, and Lincoln took the memorandum to Washington. After his death it was found among his private papers by David Davis, the administrator of his estate.

Lincoln's memorandum, water stained and wrinkled with age, is now in the Springfield Marine Bank, which is located on the same spot where the President-Elect first turned it over to Robert Irwin on February 9, 1861.

The memorandum, drawn up in Lincoln's careful, neat handwriting, contains the itemized account of the investments of his savings of a quarter-century practice of politics and the law.<sup>1</sup> The 160-acres which he owned in Iowa is omitted, but this had not, nor did it ever become a source of income, and during his presidency Lincoln left the care, and payment of taxes on it, to Clifton H. Moore of Clinton, Illinois.

This quarter section of land, valued at ten to twelve dollars an acre; a lot in Lincoln, Illinois, the town taxes on which were less than a dollar a year; and his home, which he had just insured for \$3,200, were the sum of Lincoln's real estate holdings in 1861. He had arrived in Springfield in 1837 with no funds and a debt derived from running a series of unprofitable stores at New Salem.

This debt had been paid, and slowly Lincoln had accumulated and lent his savings to a number of well known Springfield individuals, business firms, and to N. B. Judd of Chicago, his friend and political associate.

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<sup>1</sup> This memorandum is reproduced in facsimile in Harry E. Pratt, *The Personal Finances of Abraham Lincoln*, pp. 80-81.



The notes vary in amounts from \$150 to \$3,000 and total \$9,337.90. Less than a third of the amount was secured by mortgages. That Lincoln possessed almost \$10,000 in good loans and a bank balance of approximately \$1,600 at the time of his leaving Springfield to become President, was certainly not suspected by his contemporary biographers, nor even known to those of a later time. Many writers have supposed that Lincoln had accumulated no property except his house, and have accepted Lamon's statement that Lincoln had to borrow money to go to his inauguration. If the value of his real estate is added, he was worth approximately \$15,000 when he became President.

The account of the increase of his estate to over \$85,000 at the time of his death can now be told. This increment of \$70,000 to his estate came largely from Lincoln's savings from his \$25,000 yearly salary as President.

During his term as President, Lincoln received forty-nine monthly salary warrants, the disposal of each of which has been traced. The first four warrants were deposited with Riggs and Co., Washington bankers. Fourteen more warrants were deposited there during the next four years. There was no apparent effort to maintain a large balance, the deposits being made only as needed. Only four deposits were made to this account other than salary warrants. Two interesting checks among the 222 written by Lincoln on the Riggs bank were those to Tad "when he is able to present," and to the "Colored man, with one leg."

Starting in the spring of 1864, a monthly withdrawal of \$800 can be noted on the Riggs and Co. ledger which continues to March, 1865. It is surmised that this amount was used to pay household expenses. Riggs and Co. turned over a balance of \$1373.53 to Lincoln's estate.

Lincoln's salary warrant for August, 1864, in the amount of \$1981.66, was deposited in the First National

Bank of Washington. From this account he withdrew \$800 in March and again in April, 1865. The balance of \$381.66 was turned over to the administrator.

The monthly salary warrant of \$2083.33 received by Lincoln for the first eighteen months of his term was reduced to \$2022.33 in September, 1862. This decrease was due to the fact that under the Act of July 1, 1862, the Treasury Department deducted a 3% income tax, after allowing an annual exemption of \$800. The Act of 1864 reduced the exemption to \$600 and increased the rate to 5%, thus again lowering Lincoln's monthly stipend to \$1981.66 beginning with July, 1864. The salary for the period from April 4th to April 15th, 1865, in the amount of \$847.83 was paid to the administrator.

The first section of the second Article of the Constitution prohibits the diminution of the President's salary during the period for which he is elected. In 1869 the Attorney General rendered to the Secretary of the Treasury an opinion holding that the Constitution prohibited the diminution of the President's salary by the deduction of an income tax.

In 1872 David Davis, administrator of Lincoln's estate, filed a claim for refund of the income tax paid by President Lincoln on his salary in the amount of \$3555.94. This claim was allowed and paid.

Financing the Civil War was the greatest problem faced by the special session of Congress, called in July, 1861. Neither the President, the Secretary of the Treasury, nor the leaders in Congress clearly realized the magnitude of the problem. When taxes should have at once been increased, borrowing was resorted to, with the result that in "the first year of the war, loans exceeded taxes more than eightfold." Laws passed in the summer of 1861 authorized large bond issues at six per cent, redeemable after twenty years, and an issue of \$140,000,000 in treasury notes. At

Secretary Chase's suggestion, these notes bore 7.3% interest, or two cents a day on a hundred dollar loan.

On March 15, 1862, Lincoln had on hand seven salary warrants, totaling \$14,583.33. These were for the months of July, 1861, through January, 1862. With the currency received for them Lincoln purchased \$14,200 of 7-30 Treasury Notes of the issue of August 5, 1861. The notes purchased by Lincoln bore interest from the date of purchase. A month later on April 15, 1862, he used his salary warrant for the preceding month to purchase \$2,000 more of the same issue of notes.

On August 1, 1863, Lincoln made a third purchase from the Treasury. Congress, under the Act of February 25, 1862, and subsequent acts, had made provision for short, temporary loans of not less than thirty days, with rates of from four to six per cent. Lincoln, under these acts, turned over his eleven salary warrants for the months of August, 1862, to June, 1863, in the total amount of \$22,306.67, for a Certificate of Temporary Loan at five per cent. The interest was payable in currency rather than in gold. Seventeen days later he purchased a like certificate in the amount of \$3874.73. This certificate was paid for with his salary warrant for July, 1863, and a cash sum of \$1852.40. This cash sum was derived from interest in gold collected on the \$16,200 of 7-30s which was turned back into the Treasury at a premium. This interest and premium, \$1385.74, plus the \$466.66 remaining from the eight salary checks used in the purchase of the \$16,200 in 7-30s makes the total cash sum of \$1852.40.

By these four transactions Lincoln had invested in government securities \$16,200 in 7-30 notes and \$26,181.40 in Certificates of Temporary Loan, making a total of \$42,381.40.

On January 12, 1864, he purchased \$8,000 of "Fifties" issued under the Act of February 25, 1862.

These bonds were redeemable after five years and payable twenty years from date and bore six per cent interest, payable in gold semi-annually on May 1 and November 1 of each year. These bonds bearing interest from date of purchase, Lincoln paid for with his salary warrants for August to December, 1863.

An unsigned letter in Lincoln's handwriting to Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, dated June 10, 1864, helps to clarify his financial affairs during the last year of his life.<sup>2</sup>

Lincoln carried the items listed in his letter to the Treasury Department and deposited them on Secretary Chase's desk. Maunsell B. Field, the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, in his volume of *Memories*, page 283, described the incident in the following manner: "I happened once to be with the Secretary when the President, without knocking, and unannounced, as was his habit, entered the room. His rusty black hat was on the back of his head, and he wore, as was his custom, an old gray shawl across his shoulders . . . I said good morning to Mr. Lincoln, and then, as was the established etiquette when the President called, withdrew. . . . In less than five minutes I was summoned to return to the Secretary. Mr. Schuckers, his private secretary, entered the room at the same time that I did. The President was gone, and there was lying upon one end of Mr. Chase's desk a confused mass of Treasury notes, Demand notes, Seven-thirty notes, and other representatives of value. Mr. Chase told us that this lot of money had just been brought by Mr. Lincoln, who desired to have it converted into bonds."

Chase turned the securities over to George Harrington, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, for investment. The

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<sup>2</sup> This letter is reproduced in facsimile in Pratt, *The Personal Finances of Abraham Lincoln*, p. 128. The original is owned by the heirs of David Davis, Bloomington, Illinois.



two salary warrants listed in Lincoln's letter were for the months of February and March, 1864; the \$89.00 in Greenbacks were evidently the amount left over from the purchase of the \$8,000 in bonds on January 12, 1864. In a list made by Harrington of the items left by Lincoln with Secretary Chase, there is "Gold in bag \$883.30" that is not mentioned in Lincoln's letter of June 10th. Of the bonds turned over there was accrued and unpaid interest on the \$16,200 of the 7-30s from March 1, 1863. Harrington collected this interest and the "Gold in bag \$883.-30" is the interest on \$12,100 of these bonds. This amount added to the total in the letter made the sum of \$55,398.-37 in Harrington's hands for investment.

Harrington collected \$1150.06 interest in currency on the \$26,181.40 of Temporary Loans; \$362.08 interest in gold on the \$16,200 of 7-30 notes from March 1, 1864; and \$145.05 interest in gold on the \$8,000 of 5-20 bonds. He sold the gold from the interest payments and the \$883.-30 "Gold in bag" to the Treasury at a premium of 188, receiving for it \$2645.24 in currency.

Harrington took the two salary warrants, \$4044.67; the two certificates of Temporary Loan \$26,181.40; the \$89.-00 in currency; the \$2645.24 of collected interest, and with these purchased from the First National Bank of Washington \$32,800 in bonds of 1881, bearing 6% interest, payable in gold. He paid a premium of four per cent thereon, thus making the total purchase price \$34,-112. He then converted the \$16,200 of 7-30s into the same amount of bonds of 1881, bearing interest at 6% in gold. He made no change in the \$8,000 of 5-20 bonds. From these transactions Lincoln received \$49,000 in bonds of 1881 and these with the \$8,000 of 5-20 bonds made a total of \$57,000.

In November, 1864, the interest on the 5-20s came due and was probably collected by Harrington in gold in the



amount of \$240. On January 1, 1865, he collected the interest due on the \$49,000 which amounted to \$1481.60 in gold. These two interest payments were sold to the Treasury on the 24th of January at a premium of 177. The \$2781.04 received was invested in a Certificate of Temporary Loan bearing 6% interest. Harrington received no further sums on account of these securities.

On his investments while President, Lincoln received almost \$10,000 in income, which almost in the entirety he reinvested. The interest payable in currency on the Certificates of Temporary Loan amounted in the aggregate to \$1150.06. From his bonds, the interest on which was payable in gold, Lincoln received approximately \$4650, and on this sum around \$4,000 in premium.

He demonstrated his faith in the soundness of the government over which he presided by investing more than one-half of his salary exclusively in government bonds. Twenty-six of his salary warrants were thus invested, while four warrants came into the hands of his administrator.

Holding his salary warrants until, at one time, he had eleven on hand, meanwhile losing the interest payments, shows that he did not care about getting the maximum out of interest. On the three occasions when he held his salary warrants for a period of time he lost in interest and in premium about \$1,500. However, he was not unmindful of the end of the three year period when his 7-30 Treasury Notes should cease to bear interest, and we find him turning them over to Secretary Chase to be reinvested in bonds.

When the news of the death of President Lincoln was flashed over the country on the morning of April 15, 1865, business was suspended, political differences were laid aside, all protests were forgotten and an atmosphere of grief enveloped the nation. In the city of Chicago, scene of Lin-

coln's triumph in May, 1860, the United States District Court was sitting. On its bench were Judge Thomas Drummond, before whom Lincoln had practiced for five years, and Justice David Davis, with whom he had travelled a dozen years on the old Eighth Circuit.

The court called to order, Justice Davis arose, his massive countenance portraying his great personal loss. "This nation," he said, "is stricken by a great calamity and a great sorrow. My sorrow is a double one. I sorrow, not only as a citizen of the United States, but as a personal and devoted friend of the President.

"The President of the United States has been murdered. Atrocious crimes, with few parallels in history have been committed. Let us take a day for reflection and meet on Monday and give public expression to our feelings and duties."

At noon came a telegram from Robert Lincoln: "Please come at once to Washington to take charge of my father's affairs. Answer."

In response to this urgent request Davis set out immediately for Washington, where he found Mrs. Lincoln prostrated with grief.

The Judge did not accompany the body of Mr. Lincoln on its long journey to Springfield. Stricken by the death of his friend, he wrote on April 24th to his brother-in-law, Judge Julius Rockwell, who had served in Congress with Mr. Lincoln and had signed Robert's bond when he entered Harvard College: "The terrible crimes which have saddened the country as the country was never saddened before, and the length and breadth of which cannot now be told, brought me here. I should have come anyhow, but Lincoln's son telegraphed me to come on and take care of his private affairs.

"I could not avoid the responsibility and care. I went on with the remains to Baltimore, Saturday, and have been

busy getting his papers ready to take to Illinois. They will be ready today, I hope, and I will return direct to Chicago tomorrow. I am tired, very tired and worn out with excitement, and want to get with my loved ones for a day. I shall accompany the remains from Chicago to Springfield." A week later he wrote: "I got home Thursday and came here [Chicago] yesterday to attend Mr. Lincoln's remains to Springfield. Shall go with a committee of 100 to Michigan City tomorrow to meet them. It is raining and has been for ten days. I fear that tomorrow will be rainy. If it is clear, it is estimated that 300,000 people will be here. I cannot be reconciled to Mr. Lincoln's death and the manner of it."

Judge Davis, upon examination in Washington, found the financial affairs of Mr. Lincoln in good shape. Checking over the President's personal papers and his bank accounts at Riggs and Co. and the First National Bank in Washington, he was able to estimate the estate very closely. He brought to Springfield the President's last four salary warrants, uncashed in the amounts of \$1,981.67, \$1,981.-67, \$1,976.22, and \$1,981.67. He also brought an uncashed draft for \$133.00 from the President's last law partner, William H. Herndon. The source of the \$133.00 in the uncashed draft is explained in Mr. Herndon's letter which follows:

Springfield Ill. Feby. 11th 1865

His Exc. A. Lincoln

Dear Friend

Enclosed is draft for one hundred & thirty three dolls. in your favor. It comes this way — I have collected —

1 Gold Watch	\$75.00
Shockly-Log Co.	45.00
Chatterton	25.00
Com & Co.	35.00
Wilson-Ohio	25.00

Hinman-Criminal	41.00	
Cost-Fedrl Court fees	25.00	
	<hr/>	
	\$271.00	
		\$135.50
Paid Enos-Clk \$25.00 half yours	12.50	
	<hr/>	
		\$123.00
Borrowed of you at Washington	25.00	
	<hr/>	
		\$148.00
Draft		133.00
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I owe	\$ 15.00	

you fifteen dollars and will send it to you sometime. I kept, rather, gave away the watch to my girl, thinking it worth seventy five dollars, doing you justice, I think. The reason why I do not send the fifteen dollars now is because I made a mistake in my calculations & bought the bill with that error out of view. . . . I am toddling on tolerably well, just making ends meet, but that is enough for me or any man in this world at this time. *Above* all I am a sober man, and will keep so the balance of my days.

Your friend

W. H. Herndon

No will of the President being found, Mrs. Lincoln and her son Robert addressed a letter to the Judge of the County Court of Sangamon County (Judge N. M. Broadwell) asking that Letters of Administration be granted to David Davis. On June 14th, 1865, Judge Davis in the Sangamon County Court made affidavit of the "decease of Abraham Lincoln on or about the 14th day of April, A.D., 1865, Intestate as it is said and that his Estate will probably amount to the sum of \$85,000; that said Abraham Lincoln left at the time of his decease, Mary Lincoln his widow, and Robert T. Lincoln and Thomas Lincoln his children."



Letters of administration were granted to Judge Davis on June 16 and he took the oath to "well and truly administer" the estate, and signed an administrator's bond for the amount of \$160,000 with John T. Stuart, Lincoln's first law partner, as surety.

Judge Davis took Herndon's draft for \$133.00 and the four uncashed salary warrants to the Springfield Marine and Fire Insurance Co. These items, with the \$9,044.41 collected by Robert Irwin on Lincoln's notes left with him in 1861, plus some rent from the Lincoln home, and \$213.-00 in fees collected by William H. Herndon for the old law firm, made a total deposit of \$17,098.64.

On June 20, 1865, Davis directed the Marine Bank to purchase \$17,000 worth of United States Seven-thirty bonds of 1865. These bonds were purchased slightly under par, costing the estate \$16,915. Upon his return to Washington in July, 1865, Judge Davis received from Mr. Harrington of the Treasury Department \$49,000 in United States Government bonds of the July, 1861, issue, payable twenty years from date. Mr. Lincoln also owned \$8,-000 in "Five-twenties of 1862." This bond issue of February 25, 1862, bearing six per cent interest was redeemable after five and payable twenty years from date.

The interest on the bonds was payable semi-annually in gold. Justice Davis also received a certificate of temporary loan for \$2,781.04 at six per cent payable in currency.

Mr. Lincoln had on deposit in Washington at Riggs and Co. \$1,373.53 and \$381.66 in the First National Bank. Thus there was turned over to the administrator in Washington a total of \$61,536.23 in bonds and cash. This amount added to the deposit in the Marine Bank made a total of \$78,634.87 in bonds and cash belonging to the estate. Judge Davis opened an account as Administrator with the First National Bank in Washington, on July 25, 1865.



The semi-annual interest payment, \$1,710 in gold, on the \$57,000 of 5% bonds, was sold at 143% netting the estate \$2,445.30. This amount with the \$1,373.35 transferred from Riggs and Co. to the First National Bank with the \$381.66 on deposit there, a total of \$4,200.49, was invested at par in \$4,200 of United States 7-30s of 1865.

The United States Certificate of Deposit for \$2,781.04 with interest of \$88.36, was used by the administrator on August 24, 1865, to purchase \$2,850 worth of 7-30 bonds. These were the last bonds purchased for the estate by the administrator. He now held \$81,050 of government securities; made up of \$49,000 registered bonds 1861; \$8,000 of registered five-twenties of 1862, and \$24,050 of 7-30s of 1865.

In January, 1866, General Spinner, Treasurer of the United States, paid Justice Davis \$847.83 for the April, 1865, salary of President Lincoln. In the previous month Congress had appropriated a year's salary to Mrs. Lincoln minus any payments already made the President or his estate during the year March 4, 1865, to March 4, 1866. From the \$25,000 yearly salary was deducted the March salary warrant of \$1,981.67, the April salary of \$847.83 and the 5% income tax on these two payments, \$145.16, leaving for Mrs. Lincoln \$22,025.34. This amount was paid to her in 7-30 bonds of 1865. No income tax on this amount was withheld by the Treasury because it was not considered as salary but as a donation. This donation of \$22,025.34 did not come into the administrator's hands as the appropriation was not made to the estate but was made directly to Mrs. Lincoln.

Judge Davis as administrator did not give notice in Springfield until May 2, 1866, for all persons having claims against the estate to present them for adjustment. The *Illinois State Register* and the *Illinois State Journal* published the notice during the month of May, to comply

with the law of the state. The only claim filed was one for \$11.00 to Allen N. Ford for four years' subscription to the *Illinois Gazette*, a Lacon, Illinois, newspaper President Lincoln was receiving at the time of his death. Mr. Ford, editor of the *Illinois Gazette* 1840-1866, had been a friend and supporter of Mr. Lincoln. He was one of the anti-Nebraska editors of the state who, in the Decatur convention, February 22, 1856, drafted a platform and appointed the state central committee which called the first Republican state convention in Illinois. No claims for accounts of Mrs. Lincoln were filed against the estate.

The administrator also held ten per cent notes due Mr. Lincoln to the amount of \$4,427.69. The major part of this amount was a note given in 1859 by Norman B. Judd for \$3,000 at ten per cent which netted the estate \$5,400 when paid September 2, 1867.

A note of John P. Mercer, Shelbyville, of May 25, 1852, for the small sum of \$7.69 was uncollected. Of more interest is the note for \$260.00 given in Washington, November 5, 1864, by M. B. Church, marked worthless by the administrator. M. B. Church is listed in the 1860-61 Springfield directory as a student in the Lincoln & Hernon law office.

The note of William and Golden Patterson of Urbana made April 25, 1859, for \$60.00, was part of a fee received in a murder case in the Champaign Circuit Court. This note was paid in February, 1866. Another, by Milton Davis of Danville, November 7, 1857, for \$50.00, was settled in June, 1869. Two notes for \$200 each were given in 1858 to Lincoln by A. and J. Haines of Pekin. The balance due, \$154.65, was paid to the Lincoln estate in June, 1867. In July, 1858, Thomas J. Turner of Freeport, Illinois, gave Lincoln his note for \$400 at ten per cent. In February, 1866, Judge Davis recorded the payment of

\$400 on a compromise. It is likely that he waived the interest in order to get the principal.

In the assets of the estate is listed a payment of Jas. H. and Jas. S. McDaniel of Sangamon County, \$349.00. This was on a note for \$250 collected for the estate by Wm. H. Herndon.

The real estate listed by the administrator in the inventory of the estate included forty acres in Tama County, Iowa, acquired in 1854 under an Act of Congress of 1850 providing bounties to participants in the Black Hawk War. Patent to 120 acres more for services in the same war was issued to him in 1860. This land Lincoln located in Crawford County, Iowa, six miles northwest of Denison, the county seat. In 1858 he acquired a lot in Lincoln, Illinois, situated on the south side of the courthouse square. The forty-acre tract in Coles County, Illinois, purchased from his father in 1841 was not listed in the inventory of the estate. His home at the northeast corner of Eighth and Jackson Streets, Springfield, concludes the list of real estate holdings in 1861.

In 1861, Mr. Lincoln had rented his home to Mr. Lucian A. Tilton, President of the Great Western Railroad, for \$350 a year. The administrator lists the payments for 1865, 1866 and 1867, totaling \$1,050. In 1865 the home had an assessed value of \$3,500 and city taxes were \$52.50, and the state and county taxes \$60.50, a total of \$113.00. The next year the tax was \$182.80. The valuation, \$3,500, remained the same, but sewer tax of \$35.00 and an increase of the State's War tax to \$36.00 account for most of the 60% increase.

On February 8, 1861, three days before going to Washington, Mr. Lincoln had insured his Springfield property with the Hartford Fire Insurance Company for \$3,200 against loss or damage by fire. The policy called for \$3,000 on his frame two story dwelling; "\$75.00 on his frame

Carriage House, 18 by 20 feet, 60 feet East of Dwelling:" and "\$125 on his frame Wood House and Privy, 13 by 50 feet, adjoining [the] Carriage House and 78 feet East of [the] Dwelling." This policy, renewed annually, was in force when Judge Davis made his accounting with the court on November 13, 1867. At this time the annual premium was twenty-seven dollars and twenty cents.

After payments for taxes, fire insurance and repairs, little revenue remained from the Lincoln home. During the period of administration of the estate the net yearly return from the home amounted to between fifty and seventy-five dollars, which was divided equally between Robert and Thomas, Mrs. Lincoln foregoing any claim to this income.

The receipts of the estate during the period of administration were as follows:

Acct. in Spg. Marine & Fire Ins. Co.	\$ 9,044.41
U. S. Treasury Warrants (salary)	7,921.23
Certificate of Temporary Loan	2,781.04
Cash (Riggs & First Nat'l. Banks)	2,736.02
Notes collected	3,856.18
Interest on Notes and Bonds	18,590.01
Rents	1,050.00
Claim from Wm. H. Herndon	30.00
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	\$46,008.89

The expenditures of the administrator from June, 1865, to November, 1867, total \$37,425.79, made up of the following:

Bonds Purchased for Investment	\$23,987.80
Costs of Administration	92.68
Taxes, Insurance & Repairs	395.29
Mrs. Lincoln	4,084.83
Robert Lincoln	7,267.65
Tad Lincoln	1,586.54



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\$37,425.79

With receipts of \$46,008.89 and expenditures of \$37,425.79, there was a cash balance of \$8,583.10 left in the hands of the administrator.

On November 13, 1867, Justice Davis divided the estate among the three heirs, Mrs. Mary Lincoln, Robert and Tad. The \$49,000 of 6% registered bonds of 1881 had by reason of accrued interest and a premium of 12% an additional value of \$5,800. The \$8,000 of 5-20 bonds of 1862 had a premium of 8%, or \$640. The \$24,050 of 7-30 bonds were at a premium of 5%, making \$1,202.50.

Thus it will be seen that, including the accrued interest and premiums as above, in the amount of \$7,722.50, this \$81,050 of bonds were worth \$88,772.50 on the day of distribution. With the cash balance of \$8,583.10, there was consequently a total of \$97,355.60 to divide among the heirs. The total withdrawals of the heirs during the period of administration as shown above was \$12,941.20. This \$12,941.20 with the \$97,355.60 on hand for division made Lincoln's net estate \$110,296.80 exclusive of his real estate holdings. This amount was divided equally among the heirs, each receiving \$36,765.60.

Accrued interest for six months on \$24,050 worth of bonds was erroneously left out by the administrator in the November, 1867, settlement. In July, 1868, this interest in the amount of \$877.82 less \$200 paid to Mr. Lucian Tilton for repairs on the house in Springfield was divided equally between the heirs, each receiving \$225.94. This amount with the distribution of 1867 made a total of \$36,991.54 distributed to each of the heirs.

The law of the State of Illinois in force at the time of the probate of the Lincoln estate provided that upon granting letters of administration, a warrant should be



issued under the seal of the probate court authorizing three persons of discretion to appraise the goods, chattels and personal estate of the deceased. From the records of the estate it appears that no appraisement was made.

At this time the law provided that a widow should be entitled, in addition to her one-third of the personal property, an allowance of certain chattels and a sum of money sufficient to maintain herself and children for a period of one year. The cash allowance does not appear to have been set off to Mrs. Lincoln, although she undoubtedly received the various chattels to which she was entitled.

The final report of the estate of Abraham Lincoln was filed by Justice Davis November 13, and was approved December 11, 1868. Davis made no claim for compensation, either for personal expenses incurred (as travelling, clerk hire) or for commissions. He did not follow the customary procedure and employ an attorney. Under the law the administrator was allowed a maximum of six per cent of the value of the personal property, which would have entitled him to over \$6,600.

That Justice Davis' fine handling of the estate was appreciated by the heirs is shown in a letter to him from Mrs. Lincoln, November 18, 1866: "Permit me to say, that in no hands save your own, could our interests have been so advantageously placed. Please accept my grateful thanks for all your kindness to myself and family." Many years later Robert in much the same tone wrote to Thomas Dent on September 12, 1919. "I cannot remember when I did not know Judge Davis, first as the Circuit Judge of whom I heard as a boy everything good from my father and who was very kind to me. Upon my father's death I went to Judge Davis as a second father, and this he was to me until his death. I am deeply indebted to him for counsel and affectionate help on many occasions and revere his memory."



FRIENDS OF LINCOLN





ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S PARTNER,  
BILLY HERNDON

HORACE SAUNDERS \*

I appreciate this opportunity to pay tribute to a man who has probably been one of the most criticised, the most abused, and the most misunderstood characters in the history of America. I, of course, refer to William H. Herndon, or "Billy" Herndon, as Mr. Lincoln usually called him.

Both Abraham Lincoln and Billy Herndon were born in the State of Kentucky; Herndon's birthplace being Greensburg, which is less than thirty miles from Lincoln's birthplace near Hodgenville. Herndon, as some of you know, was nine years younger than Lincoln, he having been born on December 25, 1818.

Billy's father, Archer G. Herndon, was a staunch Southern Democrat, and played a most active part on the side of slavery. In 1825, Archer Herndon moved with his family to Springfield, Illinois, and there he established the first regular tavern in the town. It was here at this tavern that his oldest son first contracted the unfortunate habit of drink; a habit which Billy fought against and spoke against and wrote against all his life; for, at heart, Billy Herndon was really a temperance man.

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\* Horace Saunders, Chicago, was for many years before his death a student and admirer of the life of William H. Herndon.

As a boy, young Herndon attended private schools in Springfield, but, in the fall of 1836, he entered Illinois College at Jacksonville, and there he remained for about a year when an important incident, which was really a turning point in his life, took place. In relating this, it must be remembered that at that time, Illinois College was a hot-bed of abolitionism. The president, Dr. Edward Beecher, was not only a radical Abolitionist himself, but was also a brother of that famous anti-slavery pair, Henry Ward Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe.

In 1837, or about a year after Herndon entered college, a pro-slavery mob, in an attempt to destroy the newspaper published by Elijah Lovejoy, another radical Abolitionist, at Alton, Illinois, shot and killed Lovejoy, and threw his printing press into the Mississippi River. This act of violence brought the slavery question to fever heat all through the Middle West; and, of course, news of it soon reached Illinois College, where the excitement became intense. At a mass meeting of the students, young, impetuous, Billy Herndon delivered a stirring speech against slavery and the attempt to gag the press by mob rule.

It was not long, however, before Billy's father, that staunch pro-slavery Democrat, learned of his son's action; and, in great parental wrath, he recalled the boy from college, exclaiming that he would have no part in the education of "a damned Abolitionist pup." The boy came home. He was severely reprimanded for his act and his views, but he stood his ground. This caused a break between father and son, and Billy Herndon left home, never again to return to live, although he visited his mother almost daily. He went to Joshua F. Speed, for whom he had worked at odd times, and was given steady employment in Speed's store as a clerk.

Now, this incident is significant for two reasons; first, from that time forward, Herndon was a radical, out-



spoken Abolitionist; and secondly, it marked the beginning of a closer contact and association between Herndon and Abraham Lincoln, who also lived at Speed's. This association soon ripened into that firm friendship and later partnership which have now become history.

It was during this same year of 1837 that Lincoln was admitted to the bar; and sometime after the spring of 1841, he induced Herndon to take up the study of law in Logan & Lincoln's law office, and in December, 1844, Herndon was admitted to the practice.

Just how Lincoln and Herndon became partners is related by Herndon himself, who informs us that suddenly one morning, Lincoln came rushing into his quarters, seemingly very much excited and agitated, told him that he had determined to serve his partnership with Logan, and then he asked Herndon to go into partnership with him. Herndon tells us that he was very much surprised at this request because of his own youth and lack of experience. It seems that Herndon had not as yet received his license to practice. But when Lincoln remarked in his earnest, honest way, "Billy, I can trust you, if you can trust me," Herndon accepted; and that, so far as we know, was their only partnership pact, a pact which lasted until Lincoln left Springfield to become President. When Abraham Lincoln chose Billy Herndon for his partner, he made one of the master strokes of his life.

Herndon was a natural born student and an inveterate reader of books in many fields of thought and endeavor. In fact, we are told that his chief extravagance was that of buying books. The principal book dealer in Springfield in the early fifties, informs us that Herndon, every year, read more books in history, pedagogy, medicine, theology, and general literature, than all the teachers and all the doctors and all the ministers in Springfield put together. Another marked characteristic of Herndon was the ra-

pidity with which he could digest and master the essentials of anything he read. And we may also add to this a splendid, yes, an extraordinary memory.

Then, too, Herndon, even more than Lincoln, subscribed to a number of papers and periodicals, bought pamphlets and sermons; and, more important still, he had a wide range of correspondence with such men as Greeley, Garrison, Phillips, Parker, Sumner, Seward and Trumbull, and many others. In short, after a time, Herndon became a veritable encyclopedia of facts in literature, science, politics, religion, and current events. I wish that I could go into more detail regarding this phase of his character, especially his voluminous and illuminating correspondence with Theodore Parker. Lincoln and Herndon in their law office often discussed books and papers and periodicals and, in particular, the many letters which were passing between Billy Herndon and the so-called wise political leaders of the East. Was all this having any effect or influence upon Lincoln's mind, upon Lincoln's sentiments, upon Lincoln's future actions? I wonder.

Let us take up a few incidents in the order in which they took place. That Herndon was popular in his own right, is evidenced by the fact that in the spring of 1854, without any solicitation on his own part and even against his own personal will—for he never had an itch for office—he was elected Mayor of Springfield by a majority of more than two to one, and where the only issue was the best man for the office. The *Springfield Journal*, in commenting on his administration noted three things; first, municipal economy; second, the erection of school buildings in every ward in Springfield; and third, let it be noted this man, who has again and again been called a drunkard by those who have endeavored to discredit his testimony about Abraham Lincoln; this man, now as Mayor of Springfield,

was the first to put into force and effect an ordinance prohibiting dram shops.

Two years later, in 1856, after having returned from a speaking tour in the State, he received an open letter through the *Journal*, asking him to become a candidate for Governor of Illinois, but he declined.

In that same year of 1856 the Republican Party was formally organized in Illinois. Of the eleven original organizers or State Central Committee, Herndon represented the Springfield district. In that year Lincoln, too, joined the party. But it was Herndon who practically pushed Lincoln into the Republican Party by signing Lincoln's name to a call for delegates to the Bloomington Convention, apparently without Lincoln's knowledge.

In 1857 the so-called fraudulent Lecompton Constitution was forced through in Kansas by the Southern Democrats. Senator Stephen A. Douglas revolted against this action of his own party, and made a stirring, powerful speech against the Lecompton affair in the United States Senate. This speech of Douglas caught the favorable attention of a number of Eastern Republican leaders; and such men as Greeley and Wilson and, some say, even Seward now began to endorse Douglas for re-election to the Senate in 1858.

This plan became known in Springfield. It was generally understood that Lincoln was to be the Republican candidate for the Senate in that year; and when Herndon learned what the Republican leaders in the East were doing, he was set on fire. He immediately wrote to Greeley, Seward, Phillips, Sumner and others, attacking Douglas, and endeavored to forestall any movement on the part of the Eastern Republicans in Douglas' behalf. The replies he received, however, were unsatisfactory and only added to his fears.

Then just as suddenly — for Herndon always did things

on the spur of the moment — he made up his mind to go East himself, personally interview these men and plead Lincoln's case before them. Lincoln was somewhat skeptical about this trip; he questioned the propriety and advisability of it because of the relationship which existed between himself and Herndon. But it was no use. Herndon's mind was made up and he set out on his mission.

In Washington he met Seward and Wilson and Trumbull and carried out his promise, made in a letter to Parker written before he left Springfield, to meet Douglas face to face and "look him in the eye." Herndon went on to New York and had a conference with Greeley and also met Henry Ward Beecher; then on to Boston where he called on Phillips, Garrison, Sumner and Governor Banks of Massachusetts. Last, but not least, he paid a visit to his idol and hero, Theodore Parker. He carefully interviewed these men, felt them out, as it were, and endeavored to convince them that Lincoln and not Douglas was the logical man for the Senate in the coming contest. In a letter to Lincoln from Boston, he complained that his reception in the East was a rather cold one, but, for the most part, they spoke well of Lincoln. And so after a month's journey, he returned to Springfield on April 5, 1858, to report to his very anxious partner.

From that time on, political activity hummed in Springfield. Quietly, without saying anything to any one, Lincoln began to prepare his speech of acceptance of the nomination. One day, after it was completed, and when the junior partner was in the law office, Lincoln closed and locked the door, pulled the curtain across the glass panel in the door, so that no one could hear or see, and then submitted his speech to the one man whom he knew he could absolutely trust and whose judgment he valued so highly, Billy Herndon. And there the two of them went over it sentence by sentence and paragraph by paragraph.



A day or two before this speech was to be delivered, Lincoln invited a dozen or so of his political friends over to the library in the State House, and there he read the speech to them. Odd as it may seem, not a single man among them endorsed it. All felt that it was too radical. One of them went so far as to call it a "damned fool utterance." Did I say that not a single man endorsed it? After all had commented on and criticised it, one man, Herndon, said, "Lincoln, deliver that speech as read, and it will make you President." Was that statement the result of a mere idle thought uttered on the impulse of the moment, as even Herndon himself would have us believe, or was it the prophecy of a man with an uncanny vision into the future?

Lincoln was nominated and delivered the "House Divided" speech. Then came the great Senatorial campaign with its famous debates with Douglas. It is needless for me to go into the story of those debates here. While Lincoln and Douglas were traveling over the length and breadth of Illinois putting forth their best oratorical efforts before its people, where was Herndon? What was he doing? Throughout the campaign, he was up early and late, writing editorials, organizing men's clubs, making speeches in smaller towns, looking up facts, dates, history, all for the benefit of his illustrious partner.

November and election day arrived. Although Lincoln received a majority of the popular votes, Douglas still controlled the State Legislature because of the unfair apportionment of the districts in that body. The Legislature on January 5, 1859, re-elected Douglas to the United States Senate. Later that same day, Henry C. Whitney, as he himself informs us, went to the Lincoln and Herndon law office, where he found Lincoln alone, slumped in a chair, "simply steeped in gloom." Naturally Whitney tried to cheer Mr. Lincoln as best he could, but seemingly it was



no use. At last Lincoln roused himself enough to thank Whitney for his good intentions, and then sliding back in his chair, Lincoln uttered these words: "Well, whatever happens, I expect everyone to desert me now, but Billy Herndon." If the world turned against him, there was one man who understood and appreciated his sterling qualities, and who would stick to him to the end, and that man was his law partner.

The extent to which Lincoln relied on Herndon's judgment can be noted in the following incident. One day early in October, 1859, Lincoln came hurrying into their law office, looking extremely pleased and carrying a letter. Turning to Herndon, he said, "Billy, I am invited to deliver a lecture in New York. Shall I go?" "By all means," replied Herndon, "and it is a good opening, too. Go, Mr. Lincoln; make your best effort." Evidently Lincoln was uncertain what to talk about, for he again asked: "If you were in my fix, what subject would you choose?" Herndon remembered that earlier in the year Lincoln had delivered a lecture on the subject "Discoveries and Inventions"; and, to use the language of the streets, the effort had simply "fallen flat." Not wishing to see Lincoln make the same mistake again, he quickly answered, "Why, a political one; that is your forte." Other friends of Lincoln concurred with Herndon's advice, and the result was the now famous Cooper Institute Address, without which Abraham Lincoln would never have become President of the United States.

From that time, until Lincoln left for Washington to assume his executive duties, Herndon was a busy man in his partner's behalf. Space prohibits going into detail regarding this period. There is one incident, however, that is pleasant to recall; their last meeting in Springfield in the afternoon of the day before Lincoln's departure.

In the course of their conversation in the little back

room office on Fifth Street, Lincoln, evidently realizing what a debt of gratitude he owed to his junior partner, asked Herndon if he desired a federal appointment, and, if so, what he wanted. Now, it must be understood that at this time, Billy Herndon was a poor man; and that here was his opportunity to materially better his circumstances. However, he declined Mr. Lincoln's offer, and all that he asked was that Mr. Lincoln would say a word or two in his behalf to the new Governor, Richard Yates, so that he might retain his position of Bank Examiner, a position he had held since 1857. And that was his only request made at the time myriads of hungry office seekers were beseeching the future President for all kinds of federal positions for themselves and their friends. That one thing, more than any other, brings out the true nobleness and unselfishness of Herndon's character.

As they were coming down the stairs together, Lincoln noticed the old partnership sign at the foot, and, addressing Herndon, he said: "Let it hang there undisturbed. Give our clients to understand that the election of a President makes no change in the firm. . . . If I live I'm coming back some time, and then we'll go right on practicing law as if nothing had ever happened."

After the assassination of Lincoln, hosts of newspaper reporters, magazine writers, and so-called biographers, swooped down upon Herndon, as the one man who knew Lincoln best, begging him for information and biographical material. He gave to them most generously from his many notes on Lincoln, which it seems he had been collecting as early as 1856, as well as his personal knowledge of his partner's life. Many recipients were not generous enough to give him credit in their articles and books.

On the contrary, some of these writers, who were mere empty hero worshipers, twisted and turned and distorted this information to such an extent that Herndon became

thoroughly disgusted and aroused, and made up his mind to do all in his power to counteract these false representations. And so, to cover a great deal of time in just a single sentence, he first, in a series of lectures in Springfield, then, in a number of articles which were widely published, and lastly, in his biography, gave to the world the results of his painstaking researches and recollections of Lincoln.

But, no sooner had the first of these reached the public, than a great storm of censure broke over Herndon's head. He was criticised, belittled, abused, contradicted, yes, and even called a traitor to his best friend. The hero worshipping public did not want a real Lincoln. They wanted an idol with a long line of proud ancestry; they wanted a Father Abraham with an ideal marriage and family life; and, above all, they wanted the whole picture permeated with a strong, orthodox, Christian flavor. That was not the real Lincoln, and Herndon knew it, and he dared to say so.

For instance, among other things Herndon told them that one day about 1850, while he and Lincoln were riding to Petersburg to take part in a case in which heredity might play a part, Lincoln confided to him that his mother, Nancy Hanks, was the illegitimate daughter of Lucy Hanks and some unknown Virginia planter. And again Herndon told them that Lincoln's married life was anything but ideal, and that at his first scheduled wedding with Mary Todd on January 1, 1841, after arrangements for the wedding were made, Lincoln failed to appear. And lastly, he told them that, although Lincoln was a religious man, was, in fact, a Deist — that is a believer in God — he was never a Christian in the then generally accepted meaning of that term, and that he never became a member of any church.

But, to the popular mind, and especially that of the religious world, this was heresy, this was sacrilege, this was

treason; and the war against Herndon was, and, in many respects, still is, on.

Two all-important questions which call for answers are first, did Herndon know Abraham Lincoln better than any other person knew him, and, second, to what extent may we rely upon his veracity as a chronicler of Lincoln's life?

How well did Herndon know Lincoln? For years I have maintained that if there is one thing that will bring out a man's true character before another, so that the other will know his virtues as well as his vices, his strength as well as his weakness, and those many little idiosyncrasies which go to make up the character of every individual, that one thing is a business partnership, and particularly a law partnership. And here we find between Lincoln and Herndon a most active and intimate law partnership for more than sixteen years.

But let me give you the testimony of one or two persons who were really in a position to know. Let us first take Henry C. Whitney, one of Lincoln's closest friends and legal associates on the Eighth Circuit, and an intimate friend of Herndon for thirty-five years. Whitney, in a letter to Herndon wrote: "You saw Lincoln as he was and know him far better than all other living men combined."

The next bit of evidence is of a much different nature. After Lincoln was elected President, but before he took office, Herndon was virtually swamped with letters of inquiry regarding the future chief executive. One of these letters was from Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts, who later became Vice President of the United States. In Herndon's reply to Wilson, dated December 21, 1860, he opened his letter with these words: "I know Lincoln better than he knows himself. I know this seems a little strong, but I risk the assertion." Then Herndon went on to describe Lincoln and to tell what Lincoln would do under certain circumstances; where he could be swayed by others



and where not. In conclusion he said: "This is Lincoln, and you mark my prediction. You and I must keep the people right; God will keep Lincoln right."

This letter sounded a little boastful: "I know Lincoln better than he knows himself"; "This is Lincoln, and you mark my prediction." Herndon was asserting himself very strongly. But, two years after Lincoln's death, Senator Wilson, in a letter to Herndon, in which he quoted what Herndon had said about Lincoln, admitted that Herndon's predictions had come true to the letter.

If there was one person to whom Lincoln laid bare his heart and soul, and to whom he confided his ambitions and his hopes and his fears, that person was Herndon; and Jesse W. Weik, in his splendid book, *The Real Lincoln*, states that Lincoln did just that thing.

We now come to the last point, namely, to what extent can we rely upon Herndon's truth-telling qualities in his published writings about Lincoln?

It is universally admitted that the most authentic word picture which we have of Lincoln; how he looked, how he acted, how he thought and reasoned, as well as those peculiar melancholy moods which used to take possession of him so often — I say it is universally admitted that the best description we have of Lincoln is that given to us by Herndon. Even those biographers who oppose him most, admit this. All biographers who touch upon Lincoln's life before he became President, have been compelled to draw much of their material for this period from Herndon's writings.

Then, too, after having studied Herndon's life and correspondence and other writings, we realize that if there was one trait which stood out in his character above all others, it was his great love of truth and his hatred of all pretense and sham and hypocrisy.



That Herndon may have made some mistakes and errors in his biography of Lincoln is probably true. Herndon never had written a book in his life. And it was only after giving other writers and biographers nearly twenty-five years to do the work, and realizing how they failed to give us Lincoln as he really was, that Herndon at last undertook the task himself.

It may also be true that Herndon's strong imaginative powers — for Herndon was a poet at heart — and his rather flourishing style of writing, caused him at times to draw his word pictures in colors a little too vivid. But that this was done intentionally for the purpose of misrepresentation, I do not and cannot believe.

The one thing which supports his firm determination to tell the truth is the very artlessness of his work, the homeliness of the narrative, and, at times, the seeming lack of good taste. These things may not be according to the most approved rules of literary style, but they certainly bear witness to the fact that the author is endeavoring to tell us the truth as he understands it.

This very artlessness of style and seeming lack of good taste make the work all the more interesting and attractive because they give the human side of Lincoln, the real Lincoln, as it were; and, after all, it is the real Lincoln that we want to know!

The last letter which Herndon received from his illustrious partner in the White House, concluded with these words: "God bless you, says your friend, A. Lincoln." Would that the rest of the world were big enough and generous enough to express a similar sentiment.

On March 18, 1891, William Herndon died on his modest little farm on the Sangamon River, five miles north of Springfield, Illinois. His last words were, "I have received my summons; I am an over-ripe sheaf." So passed into

eternity a great and good man; radical of mind but sincere of heart; one who was never willing to compromise the truth, no matter what the cost and who was, without doubt, the most devoted friend of that great character in American History, Abraham Lincoln.



## WARD HILL LAMON IN BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS

CLINT CLAY TILTON \*

It was in 1847 that Ward Hill Lamon arrived in Danville, Illinois, from Bunker Hill, Virginia. He found a town of size, then a seat of justice in the old Eighth Judicial Circuit. In his migration he brought along his slave boy, Bob, who had been given his freedom before crossing the Ohio River, to conform with the law. His services were necessary to care for the two saddle horses, the property of his former master. Although he had been given his freedom Bob refused to enjoy it and remained an encumbrance upon his master until death separated the two. Lamon at that time was 19 years old, having been born in Winchester, Virginia, January 6, 1828. Two years later he removed with his parents to Bunker Hill, in what is now West Virginia. Here he received a common school education and for two years studied medicine. His trip to the Illinois town was in response to the glowing letters of his cousin, Dr. Theodore Lamon, whose professional advertisement in the *Danville Patriot* declared that he was "prepared to practice Physic and Surgery by appointment."

Being comfortably established in the home of his cousin and with regular remittances of sufficient funds from his

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\* Clint Clay Tilton, Danville, Illinois, has written numerous articles on Lincoln and Illinois history, and *Lincoln and Lamon, Partners and Friends*.

father, he soon became a leader in the social affairs of the growing village and certain in the belief that he did not want to become a doctor. Accordingly he arranged to study law in the office of Oliver L. Davis. Later in the year he entered the law school in Louisville, Kentucky, where he spent one year as a classmate of John A. Logan, also of Illinois. Upon graduation he was admitted to practice in Kentucky and on returning to Danville was granted the same privilege in Illinois. He opened an office and soon became a real social leader. Many old letters tell of his popularity at the pioneer gatherings, whether in the home of Dr. John Scott, where exhilarating liquors were served, or in the manse of Elder Enoch Kingsbury, where the more godly were wont to foregather in decorous revelry. The old court records have little to note of his activity in legal affairs in those early days, but tradition tells of many an escapade in the rougher sports of the countryside, a demon of courage in combat, a perpetrator of rough jokes, a lusty chorus leader in midnight drinking bouts and in town affairs, a Rotarian before Rotary. Of his bouts with Old Barleycorn there is at least one record in the docket of the first elected magistrate when the town was incorporated in 1856. It reads, "Jacob Schatz vs. Ward H. Lamon and James D. Kilpatrick, assault to kill." It was the aftermath of a beating given the grocer when he refused the two more liquor on a credit basis. That they were guilty is proved by the notation that they so pleaded and were each mulct \$1 and costs. But "Chicamauga Jim," who sleeps in the Soldiers' Circle in the Town Burying Ground, then the editor of the weekly newspaper, always contended that the assault was a godly act, as the following paid advertisement appeared in his periodical two weeks later:

#### QUIT SELLING WHISKEY.

I wish to inform the people of this vicinity that I have concluded to deal no more in the article called WHISKEY. No

person need apply to me for any hereafter, because I am determined to sell no more.

— JACOB SCHATZ.

In 1850, Lamon, along with John Vance of the Salt Works and James Millikin, then a sheepraiser near Danville, who later because of resentment of fellow farmers of his introduction of sheep, sold his holdings and moved to Decatur to become a millionaire and leave a fine university as a memorial, organized and founded the first county fair in Illinois. That same year he journeyed back to Virginia and upon his return was accompanied by his bride, Angeline Turner, and her father, Ehud. The docket for the October term shows that Lamon was taking his new responsibilities seriously, as he was retained in seventeen trials and showed his ability as a lawyer by winning ten of them, having three nolle and one settled by agreement. It was noticed too, that at this term Mr. Abraham Lincoln, by odds the most popular of the Circuit Riders who followed the traveling judge in his semi-annual trips of his movable court, was showing marked interest in the young barrister and had been associated with him in several cases. Two years later the partnership of Lincoln & Lamon was formed, with the latter as the local member. This partnership was the culmination of a friendship that began in 1848 when Mr. Lincoln made his first trip over the entire Eighth Circuit. No two men ever were more unlike than Lincoln and Lamon, but each recognized some quality in the other that was a perfect foil. Lincoln trusted and depended upon the Virginian and the latter responded with a devotion and loyalty that would inspire a classic on friendship. This is shown by an entry in John Hay's diary under date of November 7, 1864, when it was generally agreed that the armed clash between the Blues of the North and the ragged Grays of the Southland soon must end and rumors were rife that misguided followers



of the Stars and Bars might resort to violence. Hay, as Secretary to the President, lived in the White House. He wrote in part: "He (Lamon) took a glass of whiskey, and then, refusing my offer of a bed, went out and rolling himself up in his cloak, lay down at the President's door, passing the night in that attitude of touching and dumb fidelity, with a small arsenal of pistols and bowie knives around him. In the morning he went away leaving my blankets at my door, before I or the President were awake." The legal partnership between the two lasted until 1856, when Lamon was elected prosecutor for the Eighth District and removed to Bloomington to be nearer Judge David Davis, who presided over the Court.

He formed a partnership with Harvey Hogg — like himself a Southerner by birth — who later during the War between the States, was an early sacrifice while leading his regiment in the Battle of Bolivar, Tennessee. While repulsing Confederate cavalry he fell pierced by nine bullets. The firm's professional card may be found in a copy of an early Bloomington city directory. The close friendship with Lincoln still continued after the dissolution of the firm. This is shown by the fact that the former partner consented to aid in the prosecution of Isaac Wyant for the murder of Anson Rusk, a case that had been venued from DeWitt County. Wyant was defended by Leonard Swett and William Orme, both members of the McLean County bar. The murder was a vicious one, and it was conceded generally that Wyant would be found guilty. His lawyers admitted every allegation of the prosecution and for the first time in the legal history of Illinois introduced a plea of insanity. A verdict of acquittal was returned by the jury after six hours deliberation. Lincoln made the closing address for the prosecution. Knowing ones were inclined to agree that the finding of the jury was partially a result of the weakness of the prosecution.

Lincoln was known for his aversion to that role and Lamon's proneness to allow his emotions to overcome his desire to win was frequently referred to.

It was in May, 1856, that Lincoln delivered his famous "Lost Speech" in Bloomington, having left unfinished court business in Danville to attend the political meeting of the newly-created Republican party. It was this address that convinced the leaders in Illinois that the Rail Splitter was of Presidential caliber. With Lamon it was a call to arms and he always was to be found sponsoring and aiding every plan of Jesse Fell, David Davis, Swett, Orme, and a dozen other Bloomingtonians, who banded to further the fortunes of their idol. Eighteen fifty-seven and fifty-eight were busy years for the Virginian. More than half of each year was taken with active court work as prosecutor in the various courts throughout the days and then gay gatherings in the various taverns over the circuit at night. There were times, too, when he indulged in the rougher sports of that day, with boisterous stories and so-called sentimental songs of the period, but withal, he found time to carry on the campaign for his friend. As a story teller he had no superior and always could hold his audience. One of his most popular numbers, if we are to believe his daughter, Dorothy, was a happening in Bloomington. As she told it, when a guest in my home, it had to do with Lincoln's wit:

"It was court week in Bloomington in 1857. A case had been finished and a recess ordered by Judge Davis. Lamon and several of the attorneys adjourned to the Court House yard for a bit of air. Soon a wrestling match was arranged between the Prosecutor and a visiting lawyer. Off came their coats — they clinched, struggled, tore up the sod — and then there was a 'down' with Lamon on top. Then as Lamon strained to force his adversary's shoulders to the earth as a token of victory, the seam of his trousers gave

way. At that moment the next case was called and there was no time to change the garment. Donning his long-tailed coat he strode into the court room and resumed his duties. All went well for a time, and then in a forgetful moment he stooped to the floor to recover a document. The secret was out. A brother attorney, seeing his predicament, hastily prepared a subscription paper for funds to purchase a new pair of trousers for the Prosecutor. The attorneys offered various ridiculous amounts until it reached Lincoln. He slowly wiped his spectacles, and after a careful reading, wrote: 'I can contribute nothing to the end in view. A. Lincoln.' "

It was in the Spring of 1859 when sorrow invaded the Lamon home. For some weeks there had been rejoicing over the expected arrival of an additional member of his family. As the date of the event came nearer he paid less and less attention to his duties, until the 10th of April, when he proudly announced to his friends, "She's a girl." Three days later a Dark Angel hovered o'er the home and Angeline, the former belle of Bunker Hill, paid the penalty of motherhood and her spirit crossed the river. During the eight years of their married life, she had furnished a drab background to a colorful husband. Hers had been the dreary restricted life that custom demanded of the wives of the 50's. She found no place in the printed records until after death, when the *Pantagraph* of April 20, 1859, said:

Funeral of Mrs. W. H. Lamon. — The funeral of this lamented lady, who died on Wednesday, the 13th inst., took place Thursday afternoon and was largely attended. Court adjourned over, and the members of the bar attended the funeral in a body, with Judge Davis at their head. Hon. A. Lincoln was also with them in the procession. Funeral services were performed at the house by Rev. Mr. Harlow of the Episcopal church, and the burial service at the grave was also read in an impressive

manner by the same gentleman, while "the wind chanted a dirge through the leafless trees around the last resting place of the departed."

The daughter, who was christened Dorothy, found a home and loving care with her father's sister, Mrs. William Morgan, in Danville, where she grew to womanhood.

After the passing of his wife, Lamon gave more and more of his time to furthering the campaign of his friend that resulted in Lincoln's selection as the Republican standard bearer in the successful campaign of 1860. These were busy days for the Virginian. He must as Prosecutor travel the Eighth Circuit, make many speeches in behalf of his friend, write leaders in other States and, after passing of his wife, become the suitor for the hand of Sallie, daughter of Judge Stephen T. Logan of Springfield. The courtship culminated in their marriage November 26, after the returns showed that his friend had been elected president. It was a social event in the capital city, and the groom was resplendent in a suit of wondrous design, having been planned by him as a fitting garb for his appointment as a Colonel on the staff of Governor-elect Richard Yates. It was a fitting recognition by one drinker of another.

In the election of Lincoln, he was of but small practical aid. Except for his letter-writing and campaign speeches he contributed nothing, he having failed to cast a vote, although he himself was a candidate on the same ticket for Prosecutor. He had been summoned to Springfield and accompanied Lincoln on his visit to the polls, where he could verify the victor's statement that he voted for every candidate on his party ticket *except* himself. But at the convention in the Chicago Wigwam, he was a mighty factor. The first two days of the convention were given to organization, when the Lincoln backers believed they were beaten. An adjournment was forced — and then entered



the Master Politician. Lamon hastily collected a few dependable friends and spent the night in preparing counterfeit tickets, each signed by him with the names of the proper officials. The next morning found the hall packed with Lincoln partisans to the exclusion of Seward supporters. Bedlam broke loose when Lincoln's name was mentioned and the gathering was stampeded. It was the forerunner of the Democratic convention of 1940 when the "Voice of the Sewer" created the demand for Roosevelt.

With the election of his friend, Lamon expected a diplomatic post, preferably in Paris. He plunged into work, closed his personal affairs and cleared the court docket in preparation for a resignation. So sure was he that he would be remembered when the president-elect entered on his duties that he was inclined to put on airs. "I feel sorry for Hill Lamon," wrote Judge Davis to his friend, William Orme in Bloomington, "and yet, my good friend, when he was in Bloomington with his negro boy, Bob, I made up my mind that his head was turned and that he would hereafter do no good. He makes himself ridiculous."

By the first of February he had his business affairs in shape and was the possessor of \$25,000 in cash — a fortune in those days. He was counting on the Paris appointment when he received a letter. "Dear Hill," it read. "I need you. I want you to go to Washington with me and be prepared for a long stay." It was a call of friendship. The dream of Paris was a memory.

He boarded an early train for Springfield. Here he found the Lincoln family lodged in the Chenery House, with all the trunks packed and tagged; "A. Lincoln, Executive Mansion, Washington." Bloomington saw him no more, except for a passing glance, as he sat near the bier of the martyred President as the funeral train passed



through town enroute back to his final resting place in the capital city.

Lincoln started for Washington by special train on the morning of February 11, 1861. In the party were Judge Davis, Elmer Ellsworth, who was to be an early sacrifice in the War between the States, two army officers, and several other friends and newspaper men, and — of course — Ward Hill Lamon, attired in the wonderful uniform that he had designed when appointed Colonel on the staff of Governor Dick Yates. Mrs. Lincoln and the two younger children left on a later train and joined the party in Indianapolis. Then ensued twelve hectic days as the special travelled Eastward. Crowds everywhere and each step an ovation, except the stay in New York City, where the reception was not cordial. Between stops there was much gaiety and many hours were whiled away as Lamon lent his baritone voice to the sentimental and comic songs that Lincoln adored. Judge Davis, too, contributed to the hilarity. As fat men will — he tipped the beam at 325 pounds — he was prone to doze and the Lincoln boys found much amusement in watching his stomach bob up and down as the train jolted over the rough roadbed.

At Harrisburg, Pa., where the President was scheduled to unfurl the Stars and Stripes, with its thirty-fourth star signaling the admission of Kansas to statehood, there was alarm as it was found that the handbag in which Lincoln had the official copy of his inaugural speech was missing. He and Lamon began a search and found a bag that looked all right and which his key fitted, but on being opened was found to contain a soiled shirt, some paper collars, a deck of cards and a bottle partially filled with whiskey. "I never saw Mr. Lincoln more angry than upon this occasion," related Lamon, "but the liquor was of exceeding quality. I returned the shirt." Later the right bag was located and all was serene. It was in that city that an

event occurred that has been given much space by various writers. It was there that it was decided the President-elect should journey on to Washington in secret. Allan Pinkerton, a Chicago detective, employed by a railroad to protect the bridges and tracks from damage, had found evidence of an alleged plot to kill Lincoln during the trip through Baltimore. A meeting of the members of the party was held in Philadelphia and it was decided against the will of the supposed victim and the advice of Judge Davis, that he should leave Harrisburg in secret on a special train and with but one companion of his own selection. Lamon was chosen, and while the few in the know were waiting, A. K. McClure, a member, called the Bloomingtonian aside and asked if he was properly armed. He answered by exhibiting "a brace of fine pistols, a huge bowie-knife, a blackjack, a pair of brass knuckles and hickory cudgel." In his memoirs, McClure added: "Lincoln's trust in Lamon was beautiful." Judge Davis in a letter to Orme added this tribute: "Lincoln trusted no man to the full, but he trusted Lamon more than any other." Gideon Welles, in his diary, also comments upon the bond between the two men and wails that it "is too close, I fear."

Upon arrival in the National Capital, Lincoln named his friend Marshal of the District of Columbia. His duties were varied. He was the warden of the District prison, master of ceremonies at all functions at the White House, and at his own insistence the personal bodyguard of the Executive. Also may it be said, he became the buffer between the President and the antagonistic members of the two houses of Congress. On his broad shoulders fell much of the abuse that was intended for Mr. Lincoln. In the words of Senator John P. Hale of New Hampshire, Abolitionist and critic, "We must not strike too high nor too low, but we must strike between wind and water; the

Marshal is the man to hit." They did — and for four long years he was their target. But there were compensations. He was a man of prominence, with a splendid home, a reputation second to none as a drinker, a wrestler and one who never would take a dare. His fine team of matched grays and his carriage trimmed in red silk was the admiration of all and his name might be found in almost every issue of the Congressional *Globe*, that printed the official proceedings of Congress. His private means, too, were dwindling. The Senate could not discharge him, but it could reduce his salary. They did, but he carried on. But one thing troubled him, if we are to believe a letter he wrote to Orme: "My friend Hogg told me while here that my friends in Illinois were going to present me with a sword. Jog his memory."

Thus he carried on for four long years, ever faithful, ever loyal to his friend. At the time of the assassination he was absent in Richmond on a confidential mission for his friend. Had he been in Washington most writers agree that the Booth bullet never would have been fired.

With the death of his friend he was at loose ends. He declined membership in Johnson's cabinet, opened a law office in partnership with Chauncey Black and with him wrote a biography of Lincoln that now is acclaimed as one of the best. Then he sought a return to health and wealth in the West, first settling in Boulder, Colorado, and later in Denver. Here he met Eugene Field, the "Poet of Childhood," then the editor of the *Tribune*. Denver at that time was a model background for the two. It was the life of a gold rush town of the West with the conveniences and allurements of an Eastern city. It was the last stand of unconventionality before prudery and hypocrisy held sway. It was an environment in which Field could revel and the other could delight. It was inevitable the twain should meet.

It became the custom of Field to call each afternoon at the office of his friend. On one occasion he found Lamon asleep on the floor — a favorite position of his. After waiting a time with no indication that the sleeper would awake, he pencilled the following verses, which he pinned on the sleeper's coat:

As you, dear Lamon, soundly slept  
And dreamed sweet dreams upon the floor,  
Into your hiding place I crept  
And heard the music of your snore.  
A man who sleeps as you now sleep,  
Who pipes as musically as thou —  
Who loses self in slumber deep  
As you, oh happy man, do now,  
Must have a conscience clear and free  
From troublous pangs and vain ado;  
So ever may thy slumber be —  
So ever be thy conscience, too.  
And when the last sweet sleep of all  
Shall smooth the wrinkles from thy brow,  
May God on high as gently guard  
Thy slumbering soul as I do now.

Failing to find relief from his ailments in the higher altitude of the Colorado town, with Sallie he took the long-deferred visit to Europe, hopeful that in some of the cures the two would recover the buoyancy of their days when the world was younger. But it was not to be. In Brussels, Sallie was stricken and on August 6, 1892, kindly strangers crossed her tired hands on her breast and prepared the wasted body for shipment across the seas to Springfield, where she sleeps in Oak Ridge in the burial plot of the Logan clan.

After the interment of his wife Lamon again returned to Washington, but not for long. He moved to Martinsburg, West Virginia. Here he was near the old family



holdings. Here the ravages of disease became more virulent and he became weaker. He missed the care of the faithful Sallie, but there was a worthy substitute in the person of Dorothy Lamon — Dolly he called her — his daughter by his boyhood marriage to Angeline Turner. It was near midnight of May 7, 1893, when his spirit took its flight. He was conscious to the last, but for sixteen hours had lost the power of speech. From early dawn Dolly hovered around the bedside, hoping every moment he would be able to leave some comforting word. None came, but his eyes gave her the message that all was well. She was so stunned during the long watch that she could offer no prayer of hope, but just before the summons like an inspiration came to mind the last lines of "Gene" Field's little poem, which she recited:

And when the last sweet sleep of all  
Shall smooth the wrinkles from thy brow,  
May God on high as gently guard  
Thy slumbering soul as I do now.

Lincoln's best friend smiled. These were the last words Ward Hill Lamon ever heard on earth.

As a fitting end for a Soldier of Fortune, friends buried him where he fell. He sleeps in the Gerrardstown graveyard near Martinsburg. Here he awaits the final call near the resting places of General Horatio Gates, of Saratoga and Camden battlegrounds, and General Charles Lee, who will be remembered in the story of Monmouth Field. Looking off through the trees one may see the birthplace of Belle Boyd, the Confederate spy.







## LINCOLN AND INGERSOLL

ERNEST E. EAST \*

Abraham Lincoln had a profound influence on the political life of Robert Green Ingersoll. As lawyer, as soldier, as orator and as lecturer, Ingersoll added luster to the fame of his state. His name was renowned with those of Lincoln, Douglas, Lovejoy, Grant, Logan, and others who rode high on the storm of Civil War.

Although a Democrat who endorsed the Dred Scott decision and championed the cause of Stephen A. Douglas, Ingersoll publicly declared his abhorrence of Negro slavery previous to the Congressional election of 1860, in which he was the democratic party nominee. Singularly, he was defeated by a Republican — William Kellogg<sup>1</sup> of Canton — who upheld the fugitive slave act.

Ingersoll in the early years of the rebellion stood as a War Democrat, as did also his elder brother, Ebenezer (Ebon) Clark Ingersoll, and as a leading spokesman of his party complained of the stupidity of the new Republican government, and gave Lincoln credit only for honesty of purpose.<sup>2</sup> Robert Ingersoll recruited the Eleventh

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<sup>1</sup>Peoria *Daily Transcript*, Oct. 2, 1860; *The Works of Ingersoll* (Dresden edition), [hereafter cited as *Works*] XIII:21; Cameron Rogers, *Colonel Bob Ingersoll*, 101.

<sup>2</sup>Peoria *Daily Transcript*, Sept. 2, 1861.

Illinois Cavalry Regiment, and commanded it as colonel, serving in the campaigns around Shiloh and Corinth. In private letters from the front he caustically ribbed Lincoln's military appointments and his suspension of the writ of habeas corpus. Ingersoll was captured by the enemy late in 1862 and paroled. Despairing of arranging for his exchange, he resigned his commission. Thereafter he performed notable service for the Union cause by patriotic speech-making in numerous Illinois cities, directing his sharpest attacks at "copperheads."

Meanwhile, the behavior of pro-Southern elements in the Democratic party, his brother's desertion of that party, and an increasing respect for Lincoln's policies seem gradually to have worked Ingersoll's political conversion, for by 1864 he was fully committed to the principles of the Republican party. It is doubtful whether any orator or writer has excelled Ingersoll in his reverential and elegant appraisal of the life and works of Abraham Lincoln.

Robert Green Ingersoll<sup>3</sup> was born at Dresden, N. Y., on August 11, 1833, at which time Lincoln was 24 years old and struggling for existence at New Salem. Ingersoll, like Lincoln, chose the law and rose high in his profession.

The Rev. John Ingersoll, father of Bob, and four other children, was an orthodox Congregational minister. He stayed not long in any place. Pastor John was an outspoken abolitionist and this radical stand seems to have interfered with his regular employment. He ran a grocery in Milwaukee between periods of soul-saving and near the close of his life appears to have been for several years with no pulpit assignment.

John Ingersoll observed the Sabbath strictly and did not spare the rod when his sons failed to keep the day holy. But Robert would permit no one to say that his father's harsh discipline caused him to rebel against the faith.

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<sup>3</sup> *Works*, XIII:1.

To a friend he wrote: "The story that the unkindness of my father drove me into infidelity is simply an orthodox lie." <sup>4</sup>

The Rev. John Ingersoll died at Peoria, in 1859, and lies in an unmarked grave in Springdale cemetery.

Like Lincoln, Robert Ingersoll retained the tenderest memories of his mother, Mary Livingston. He wrote: "My mother died when I was but a child; and from that day — the darkest of my life — her memory has been within my heart a sacred thing, and I have felt through all these years, her kisses on my lips." <sup>5</sup>

After removals of his father to Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin and Kentucky, Robert Ingersoll at age 17 found himself in Greenville, Illinois. He attended a subscription school, read Burns, Byron, Shakespeare, Keats and Shelley; won friends quickly with his personal magnetism and ability as a storyteller, and before he was 21 years old was engaged to teach a private school at Metropolis. But this employment ceased suddenly. Some traveling evangelists and local elders were boarding around and came to the house where Ingersoll also was boarding around. The young school teacher was asked pointedly to state his views on baptism. Ingersoll replied: "With soap, baptism is a good thing." <sup>6</sup>

At a similar age, Abe Lincoln of New Salem, according to numerous witnesses was a religious skeptic, if not an "infidel." The term "agnostic," which Ingersoll adopted, was coined by Huxley after Lincoln's death. If Lincoln did not reject orthodox Christianity during his residence in Illinois, at least he never became a member of a religious denomination. <sup>7</sup>

Nicolay and Hay wrote: "Lincoln was a man of profound and intense religious feeling. We have no purpose

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<sup>4</sup> E. M. McDonald, *Col. Robert G. Ingersoll As He Is*, 58.

<sup>5</sup> *Works*, V: 148.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII: 34; Rogers, *Col. Bob Ingersoll*, 82.

<sup>7</sup> Albert J. Beveridge, *Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1858*, II: 301.

of attempting to formulate his creed; we question if he himself ever did so.”<sup>8</sup>

Lincoln left little or nothing out of which to shape a satisfactory analysis of his religious beliefs.

Ingersoll gave no room for doubt where he stood. From young manhood to the end he was the irreconcilable iconoclast, proposing to substitute reason and mental freedom for the “monsters of superstition” which he said he found in the Christian church.

Lincoln’s attitude toward the slave problem was mostly tolerant and conciliatory. Ingersoll was uncompromisingly abolitionary. His views were formed early in life. From Waverly, Tenn., when only twenty years old, he wrote to his brother, John Ingersoll, saying:

“It is rather lonesome here all alone and in a slave state at that where the very air seems to be chained. Nothing but nigers nigers all the time. . . . I have attended one negro sale where a woman and two little children were sold and parted. . . . People here ask me . . . if I think slavery wrong and I tell them I do and that I believe it is wrong enough to damn the whole of them, and they take it in good part.”<sup>9</sup>

Stephen A. Douglas and Abraham Lincoln, two poor boys who stepped from the profession of the law to political prominence, took the stump in 1854 to present diverging views on the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. In the autumn of the same year at Marion, Illinois, Clark and Bob Ingersoll began the study of law in the office of Willis Allen, Democratic member of Congress. The progress of the pupils was exceedingly rapid. Clark Ingersoll wrote to his brother John on November 5: “We [Clark and Bob] were admitted to

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<sup>8</sup> John G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, A History*, VI:339.

<sup>9</sup> *Ingersoll MSS.*, Illinois State Historical Library, R. G. Ingersoll to Dr. John Ingersoll, Dec. 29, 1853.



the bar 'ex gratia' in one month after we commenced studying." <sup>10</sup>

Having successfully met the test of legal learning, Clark and Robert Ingersoll were formally admitted to the bar at Mount Vernon on December 20, 1854, and in the next year they removed to Shawneetown and began practice under the firm name, "E. C. and R. G. Ingersoll." In the winter of 1857-8 they moved on to Peoria. According to Editor Eugene F. Baldwin of the Peoria *Star*, both had private reasons for wishing to leave Shawneetown. Soon after Colonel Ingersoll's death in July, 1899, the editor wrote:

"Clark had become engaged in Pittsburgh, Pa., to the lady whom he subsequently married [he married Mary Carter at Erie, Penn.] and not liking life in the city on the banks of the Ohio, he declared that he would never bring her to Shawneetown. Bob had become involved in a difficulty in which he wounded a contestant with an axe, and he, too, disgusted at the outlook, listened willingly to Clark, and so they boarded a steamboat, came to St. Louis, and ascending the Illinois river disembarked at Peoria and established themselves in the practice of law." <sup>11</sup>

Elihu N. Powell, native of Steubenville, Ohio, and an old Whig supporter of Lincoln, was judge of the Sixteenth Judicial district, embracing Peoria and Stark Counties, when the Ingersoll brothers came. Among contemporaries of the Ingersolls at the bar were four men who removed to Chicago and gained distinction at the bar there. They were Charles C. Bonney and William W. O'Brien, Democrats, and Alexander McCoy and Lorin G. Pratt, Republicans. Other leaders were Charles Ballance, Henry Grove, Amos L. Merriman, William F. Bryan, Julius L. Manning, Hezekiah M. Wead and Norman H. Purple, all of whom

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, E. C. Ingersoll to Dr. John Ingersoll, Nov. 5, 1854.

<sup>11</sup> Peoria *Star*, July 22, 1899.

were associated with Lincoln in Illinois law courts, and Sabin D. Puterbaugh.

Three men mentioned were lawbook editors. Bonney compiled *Bonney on Railway Carriers*; Purple edited and published *Illinois Real Estate Laws*, and also general statutes of the state which became commonly known as *Purple's Statutes*; and Puterbaugh authored *Common Law Pleading and Practice*, and also *Chancery Pleading and Practice*.

Purple was Judge of the Illinois Supreme Court in 1846-48. He was a Democrat. Purple profoundly shocked the "copperheads" in his party with an address at Camp Lyon in Peoria, on August 29, 1861, in which he declared for the Union and the government of Abraham Lincoln. He said in part:

"Whatever may have been my previous political differences or predelictions I have an abiding confidence, yea, I may say a personal knowledge that there is an honest, true-hearted patriot at the helm. The storm may rage, the winds howl, the waves roll mountain high across her decks, but the ship of state will never sink if it is in the power of that man to hold her on her course and bring her safely into port."<sup>12</sup>

Democrats of the Peoria district in August, 1860, nominated Bob Ingersoll for Congress, nine days before he attained his 27th birthday. Within a week he carried the fight to the Republican incumbent, William Kellogg. Representative Kellogg later was to introduce in the national House a slavery compromise measure closely following a long conference with President-elect Lincoln. Ingersoll challenged Kellogg, then 46 years old, to debate the issues, and joint discussions were held in Galesburg, Pekin, Princeville and Peoria. Of Ingersoll's Peoria speech the *Daily Transcript* said:

"Bob's speech was nothing but a succession of grand

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<sup>12</sup> Peoria *Daily Democratic Union*, Sept. 1, 1861.

splurges, without wit or argument — nothing but naked and unsupported assertions. . . . the Judge [Kellogg] remarked that he had several times converted Bob to Republicanism and sent for Lovejoy or Giddings to baptize him but before either of them could reach here, Bob would creep back into the Democratic fold.”<sup>13</sup>

Candidate Ingersoll scoffed at the danger which spokesmen for Lincoln's party professed to see in the Democratic program for territories seeking admission to statehood. He proposed that all the old women in the country be set to making diapers for the infant territories, and thereafter to the *Transcript*, Ingersoll was the “Diaper Candidate.”

At Galesburg, Kellogg led off with a hot speech. He blamed Douglas for destroying the Missouri Compromise. The Republican candidate made it clear that he stood for the enforcement of the fugitive slave act since it was the law of the land and he was bound to respect guarantees which the Constitution gave to Southern States.

Ingersoll in his turn went to work early. His opening sentence was: “The fugitive slave law is the most infamous enactment that ever disgraced a statute book. The man who approves or apologizes for that infamy is a brute.”<sup>14</sup>

Owen Lovejoy over at Princeton, Bureau County, Representative in Congress from the Third district, marked up a new recruit in the crusade against the forces of slavery which had destroyed his brother, Elijah.

The campaign gave Ingersoll opportunities to exhibit his talent as an orator, but it also provided circulation to stories that the golden-voiced Peorian patronized low saloons and did not always sober up for political speech-making. The Peoria *Daily Transcript* printed an account of the “disgraceful conduct” of Ingersoll at a Democratic rally at Maquon. It was stated he got drunk, ate with his

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<sup>13</sup> Peoria *Daily Transcript*, Nov. 9, 1860.

<sup>14</sup> Clark E. Carr, *My Day and Generation*, 335-6.

fingers and took liberties with the person of a female at the hotel. Later the *Transcript* printed a further account, including the statement of eight citizens of Maquon who testified Ingersoll "was so drunk he could not stand on the platform." It was asserted that in his evening speech he swore.<sup>15</sup>

At the November election, 1860, Ingersoll outvoted Kellogg 3754 to 3550 in Peoria County, but lost every other county in the district and Kellogg was re-elected by a majority of 4500. Said the *Transcript*: "The result of the election in this district shows a poor return for all the money, whiskey and gas expended by the 'diaper candidate' and his friends."<sup>16</sup>

Ingersoll's reputation as a speaker spread and lecture invitations increased in number. He spoke on "History" at Rouse's Opera Hall in Peoria for the benefit of the Library Association, and at Canton he lectured on "Napoleon."

Then Lincoln was inaugurated. Beauregard's guns spat fire at Fort Sumter and "sprinkled blood in the faces of southern people." Elmer E. Ellsworth fell and Ingersoll made the memorial address at exercises in his honor at Camp Mather in Peoria. Meanwhile, Stephen A. Douglas said good-bye to his old antagonist, now in the White House, and came to tell the Illinois General Assembly where he stood, saying: "I believe in my conscience that it is a duty we owe to ourselves and to our children, and to our God, to protect this government and that flag from every assailant, be he whom he may." At Chicago on May 1 in his last public utterance Douglas said: "There can be no neutrals in this war; only patriots—or traitors."<sup>17</sup> Then he died and Bob Ingersoll spoke the local memorial oration, again at Camp Mather.

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<sup>15</sup> *Peoria Daily Transcript*, Oct. 24, Nov. 2, 1860.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Nov. 9, 1860.

<sup>17</sup> *Douglas Centennial Celebration Addresses*, James W. Garner, ed., 17.



Seven days after news came of the firing on Fort Sumter, a young Democrat who had lately been defeated in the Congressional election, dispatched a telegram. It read:

“Peoria, April 22, 1861.

“To Governor Yates:

“With your permission I will raise a regiment of one thousand men to be ready on call. Will you accept?

“R. G. INGERSOLL.”

The Governor was without authority to accept the offer immediately, but in September Gen. John C. Fremont authorized Ingersoll and Judge Balzil D. Meek of Woodford County to raise a regiment of cavalry, later designated as the Eleventh Illinois Cavalry.<sup>18</sup>

Ingersoll was a War Democrat, but he was not yet a Republican. Late in August, Democrats of Peoria met to name delegates to a county convention. Ingersoll spoke at length. Said the *Transcript*: “He accorded to President Lincoln a pure and honest purpose but didn’t believe there was ability enough in the cabinet to set a hen, or, if there was, there was so much dishonesty that they would suck the eggs. . . .”<sup>19</sup>

Colonel Ingersoll was tutored in military science at Camp Lyon by Paul Distler, lately a soldier in Bavaria. Ingersoll once gave an exhibition of military stupidity and Distler smacked him smartly with the flat side of his sword.

“That’s right,” said Ingersoll, “if I do it wrong treat me like the rest of them.”<sup>20</sup>

Colonel Bob’s regiment, 1,000 strong, was mustered into service on December 20, 1861. In February, 1862, In-

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<sup>18</sup> David McCulloch, *History of Peoria County*, 163.

<sup>19</sup> *Peoria Daily Transcript*, Sept. 2, 1861. The *Daily Democratic Union*, Sept. 1, 1861, said: “R. G. Ingersoll, Esq., entertained the meeting with one of the most eloquent and patriotic speeches we have heard for months.”

<sup>20</sup> Statement to the author by John Distler, son of Paul.



gersoll took a wife, wedding Eva Amelia Parker, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Weld Parker of Groveland township, Tazewell County, all three of whom shared Ingersoll's views on revealed religion. His contemporaries agree that Ingersoll upon marriage, abandoned the "gay life" and that his conduct was marked with an extraordinary devotion to his wife and their two daughters. Two weeks after his marriage the Eleventh Illinois Cavalry went overland to St. Louis and on to Shiloh.

From Corinth, Miss., on September 10, 1862, Colonel Ingersoll wrote a letter to his brother John in which the Commander-in-Chief of the Union armies and his appointees came in for an Ingersollian skinning. Said the Colonel:

"Genl Pope has lost what cost the Govt. five hundred millions of dollars. He has lost all that we gained in eighteen long dreary toilsome months. He has lost hundreds and hundreds of as brave officers as ever lived and thirty thousand soldiers. He has almost d—d the cause and has totally d—d himself.

"To allow troops to be led by such a jackass is murder. When will Lincoln stop appointing idiots because they come from Illinois or are related to his *charming* wife.

"Genl Todd, who was Genl of the Division I belong to, being a cousin of Mrs. Lincoln was made a Brig. General, although for several years he was absolutely nothing but a 'sutler' in the regular army.

"Such appointments would disgrace the devil himself, Lincoln may be honest but when you are fighting smart scoundrels, honesty is worth but little, especially when possessed by an idiot. . . ." <sup>21</sup>

Back in Peoria, Ebon Clark Ingersoll got ready to break with the Democratic party because its state convention at

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<sup>21</sup> *Ingersoll MSS.*, Illinois State Historical Library, R. G. Ingersoll to Dr. John Ingersoll.

Springfield on June 16, 1862, was controlled by the anti-war element. In a letter to the *Daily Transcript*, Clark endorsed the proposal of Walter B. Scates for a state convention of Union Democrats and added: "Old party issues have been swallowed up in the appeal to arms. There is now but one, *Union* or Dis-union. The great heart of democracy beats strong for the Union and its noble impulse cannot and will not be stayed or clogged by secession sympathizers. Now let us have a convention and teach traitors that the genuine Democracy of the north have no sympathy with the enemies of the government."<sup>22</sup>

At Corinth, Colonel Bob saw Clark's communication, which was reprinted in the *Chicago Tribune*. Wrote the Colonel to Clark: "I glory in the position you have taken. The present Democratic party are like the damned Jews under Moses. They are longing for the 'fleshpots' of slavery. . . . Slavery is dead and the sooner we act upon it the shorter will be the horrid career of the Southern Democracy. . . . The North now has the right and it is her duty to act according to the dictates of humanity. . . . Slavery is unspeakable. Destroy it."<sup>23</sup>

Illinois Republicans turned to War Democrats for counsel in 1862 and invited all elements favorable to the government to fuse in a Union party. Original Republican stalwarts were sidetracked to nominate a War Democrat for Congressman-at-Large against James C. Allen of Palestine, the anti-war Democrat nominated by the opposition. Ebon Clark Ingersoll was named on the fourth ballot in the Republican state convention at Springfield on September 24, 1862.<sup>24</sup>

At Washington, President Lincoln on September 22,

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<sup>22</sup> Peoria *Daily Transcript*, Sept. 19, 1862.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Oct. 1, 1862.

<sup>24</sup> Arthur Charles Cole, *The Era of the Civil War 1848-1870* (The Centennial History of Illinois), 296; Davidson and Stuve, *A Complete History of Illinois from 1673 to 1873*, p. 878.

1862, issued his Emancipation Proclamation and two days later suspended the writ of habeas corpus. At Corinth the old Douglas Democrat took his pen in hand and wrote again to Clark Ingersoll: "The Republicans were obliged to run a war Democrat. I am glad you were selected. They could not have made a better choice. I glory in you much more than in myself. I had rather see honours crown your head than mine. I believe you will be elected. . . . I fear but one thing. The President with his proclamation may place a greater weight upon your shoulders than it will be possible to bear. The Habeas Corpus, what is it? Only the right to know with what you are charged. . . . For my part I cannot conceive of any possible necessity under the circumstances imaginable for the suppression of that right. . . . You may say 'the President is a good man. He does all this from the finest motives.' He may be good but he is not omnipresent. . . . The Executive has gone too far. Safety for him lies in retreat. The President and the Cabinet may themselves be petitioning for the most gracious writ of Habeas Corpus."

Clark Ingersoll was beaten in the November election by Allen, the Democratic candidate who received 53 per cent of the 256,076 votes cast. In Peoria city the Democrats outvoted the Unionists 3270 to 2552.<sup>25</sup>

General Nathan Bedford Forrest led his butternut cavalry into West Tennessee in December, 1862, and Colonel Ingersoll with detachments of his own and other regiments was sent out from Jackson, Tennessee, to check the Confederates. Skirmishers were in contact with the enemy for two days. On the 18th, Colonel Ingersoll took a position on a road one mile east of Lexington, Tennessee. With seventy men and two pieces of artillery the Colonel awaited the Confederates. The Union Tennessee cavalry ran,

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<sup>25</sup> Peoria *Daily Transcript*, Nov. 8, 1862; D. W. Lusk, *Eighty Years of Illinois Politics and Politicians*, 145-6.

hotly pursued by the enemy and Ingersoll was flanked. The colonel three months later described the encounter in a letter to his brother, John:

"We repulsed them three times, over thirty of my seventy men were killed or wounded — 16 were killed on the spot. The fourth time the enemy ran over us — actually took the rammers out of the men's hands. I was the last to leave the guns. Away I went over a field and away they 'went' after me. They shot at me it seemed hundreds of times. . . . I came to a high fence. I made my horse jump. . . . He jumped the fence clear and fine but when he came down on the other side his knees gave way and he fell flat. Off I went and ran. Sesesh bagged the aforesaid. They kept me four days — paroled me. . . . Forrest tried to take Jackson and got whipped." <sup>26</sup>

Unable to arrange his exchange, Colonel Bob bade his regiment farewell and resigned his commission. Back home he continued to battle for the cause of the Union. Clark E. Carr tells the story of a patriotic meeting in Quincy at which Ingersoll spoke. The "copperheads" were there too and while the Colonel was speaking a rebel yell was heard. Bob Ingersoll, the "infidel" began to pray, saying: "God bless the soldiers of the army of the United States, wherever they may be — whether they be fighting on the hillside, the open plain, or in the dark valley, whether weary or footsore on the long march, whether parched with thirst they are dying on the field or are ministered to by loving hands in the hospital, whether they be tossed upon the uncertain waves of the great deep, whether they be writing letters to their friends by the dim light of the camp-fire, or reading letters from home, God bless the soldiers of the

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<sup>26</sup> *Ingersoll MSS.*, Illinois State Historical Library, R. G. Ingersoll to Dr. John Ingersoll, March 16, 1863. Reports of Colonel Ingersoll and of General Forrest are in *The War of the Rebellion, Official Records*, Series I, Vol. VII, Part I, 553-5. Biographies of Forrest by Thomas Jordan, and John Allen Wyeth mention the capture of Ingersoll.



army of the United States, God bless their friends, and — God damn their enemies.”<sup>27</sup>

The year 1863 brought Union victories at Gettysburg, Vicksburg and Chattanooga, and the supporters of Lincoln took new heart. By this time the Democratic party, still controlling Peoria, counted both Ingersoll brothers among the opposition. Clark probably was in full fellowship with the Republicans but Colonel Bob, while strongly Union, maintained political independence. At a Union mass meeting in Smithville, Peoria County, on August 30, 1863, the Colonel said: “I don’t care for Abraham Lincoln, but I am with him when he attempts to make the country all free. I am responsible for no party and no party is responsible for me. . . . I am neither a Democrat, a Republican, an Abolitionist or the ‘other thing.’” Sixty days later at Princeville, Colonel Ingersoll said no true Democrat could be other than a supporter of the government and a war man. The Colonel asserted that because he supported the government and went for war and stood by the President in putting down rebellion, he could not be claimed as endorsing all the measures adopted by the administration.<sup>28</sup>

The reapportionment act of 1861 transferred Owen Lovejoy’s county of Bureau to the new fifth district, which included Peoria County, and Lovejoy was re-elected to Congress in 1862. If any man in Central Illinois approached Colonel Ingersoll in oratorical brilliancy it probably was Lovejoy, a Congregational minister. Remembering the slaying of his brother, Elijah, by an anti-abolitionist mob in Alton, Owen Lovejoy was the implacable foe of slavery. He had been indicted, tried and acquitted on a charge of assisting a runaway slave. On the floor of the national House at Washington in February, 1859, Representative Otho Singleton of Mississippi branded Lovejoy a

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<sup>27</sup> Clark E. Carr, *My Day and Generation*, 309-11.

<sup>28</sup> *Peoria Daily Transcript*, Sept. 1, Oct. 30, 1863.



"nigger-stealer." A few days later Lovejoy replied, in part:

"A single word as to this charge of negro stealing. . . . If the purpose is to ascertain whether I assist slaves who come to my door and ask it, the matter is easily disposed of. I march right up to the confessional and say *I do*. . . . Proclaim it then upon the housetops; write it on every leaf that trembles in the forest; make it blaze from the sun at high noon and shine forth in the milder radiance of every star that bedecks the firmament of God; let it echo through the arches of heaven and reverberate and bellow along the deep gorges of hell where slave holders will be very likely to hear of it; Owen Lovejoy lives at Princeton, Illinois, three quarters of a mile east of the village, and he aids every fugitive that comes to his door and asks it. Thou invisible demon of slavery dost thou think to cross my humble threshold and forbid me to give bread to the hungry and shelter to the houseless? I bid you defiance in the name of my God." <sup>29</sup>

Lovejoy died March 26, 1864, and to his home town of Princeton, Colonel Bob and Clark Ingersoll journeyed in April to attend the district Union convention which was to nominate a successor to the lamented crusader. Ebon Clark Ingersoll was named. After an eloquent tribute to Lovejoy, the nominee declared that "slavery and rebellion are one and inseparable and while he would smite rebellion with one hand, with the other he would strike down slavery. . . that he would bury rebellion and pile on its grave every slave shackle in the land." Colonel Bob was loudly called for and he laid the lash more heavily on the copperheads than his brother had done, adding: "This nation has been one of idolators, worshiping slavery; now the image must be broken. Yes, I am an unconditional abolitionist. Copperheads may add 'damn' if they wish." <sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Congressional Globe*, Second Session, Thirty-fifth Congress, 892-3; *ibid.*, Appendix, 196-9.

<sup>30</sup> *Bureau County Republican*, reprinted in *Peoria Daily Transcript*, May 2, 1864.

Robert Ingersoll was co-operating with the Republican party, probably for the first time.

At the special election on May 7, Clark Ingersoll defeated Hezekiah M. Wead of Peoria, the Democratic candidate for Lovejoy's seat, by 5,000 votes. Wead carried Peoria County.<sup>31</sup>

Colonel Ingersoll spoke at a local Union mass meeting in June which ratified the nominations of Lincoln and Johnson. Bob Ingersoll was fairly within the Republican party. At Washington in the same month, Clark made his maiden speech, advocating approval of the resolution to prohibit slavery by constitutional amendment. He said, in part: "Are you of the opposition afraid to trust the people with this question? Slavery is the mother of rebellion. Destroy the mother and the child will die."<sup>32</sup>

Colonel Ingersoll spoke for the Union ticket not less than seven times in the last week of the campaign which ended with the election on Nov. 8, 1864. He filled numerous other engagements during the summer and autumn.

The Colonel spoke at Bryan hall in Chicago on the evening of October 6, and, according to the *Tribune*, the address was "one of the most eloquent ever addressed to a Chicago audience. It abounded in irresistible logic and uncontrovertible argument, while a vein of sarcastic wit ran through the whole, which kept the audience in an almost continuous demonstration of applause."<sup>33</sup>

At Peoria on October 13, Colonel Ingersoll said the election of Mr. Lincoln by an overwhelming majority was a "foregone conclusion." He closed with "a glowing tribute to the honesty and integrity of Mr. Lincoln and assured his hearers he would be elected by the almost unanimous vote of the people."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Peoria *Daily Transcript*, May 10, 1864.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, June 14, 17, 1864.

<sup>33</sup> Chicago *Tribune*, Oct. 7, 1864; Peoria *Daily Transcript*, Oct. 8, 1864.

<sup>34</sup> Peoria *Daily Transcript*, Oct. 14, 1864.

Newspapers of 1864 seldom furnished direct quotations of political speeches and much of the Ingersollian flavor was lost in the reporter's summary of the Colonel's remarks. But an exception was made in the final rally for the Lincoln and Johnson ticket in Peoria on election eve. The *Transcript* reported that Ingersoll "made one of his best speeches — forceful, logical and full of eloquence." Then the newspaper quoted him directly to say: "When the sun sets tonight and closes the golden curtains over his couch, he sets upon the lovers and sustainers of liberty, and the traitors of our country alike, but when he rises with his refulgent beams on the morning of the 9th, and gilds the countenances of loyal men with a glow that is God-like, the traitor will sneak away to some dark corner, to plot against his country but will find no place sufficiently dark to consummate the cowardly deed in." <sup>35</sup>

Clark Ingersoll was re-elected on November 8, 1864, but lost his home county. <sup>36</sup> On the 31st of January, next, the Thirteenth Amendment prohibiting slavery was adopted in the House of Representatives. A noisy demonstration greeted the announcement of the vote. A lull occurred, and John A. Logan describes the scene that followed thus: "Advantage of it was taken instantly by the successor of the dead Owen Lovejoy, Mr. Ingersoll of Illinois, his young face flushing with the glow of patriotism as he cried, 'Mr. Speaker! In honor of this immortal and sublime event, I move that the House do now adjourn'." The House adjourned. Ingersoll hurried to the telegraph office and sent home this dispatch: "John Brown's soul is marching on. The Constitutional Amendment passed today." <sup>37</sup>

Came the melancholy news that the President was dead.

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, Nov. 8, 1864.

<sup>36</sup> McCulloch, *History of Peoria County*, 194. E. C. Ingersoll was re-elected over Silas Ramsey of Lacon in 1866; over John N. Niglas of Peoria, 1868, but defeated by B. N. Stevens of Tiskilwa, 1870.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 194-5; *Congressional Globe*, Second Session, Thirty-eighth Congress, 531.

In Peoria a group of men stood on the sidewalk discussing the tragedy. Colonel Ingersoll came up, was asked to say something and began to eulogize Lincoln. Among listeners was Enoch Emery, editor and publisher of the *Transcript*, Lincoln's only newspaper friend in Peoria, and Eugene F. Baldwin, local editor. Emery grasped Baldwin by the arm, saying: "Come on, Gene, Bob is talking nonsense."<sup>38</sup> But four days later Emery wrote in the *Transcript*: "We are a nation of mourners today and as the melancholy requiem goes up from ten thousand churches and millions of mourners, it proclaims that we fully appreciate the simple virtue and noble heartedness of him who has been stricken down beneath the assassin's hand. His work is done, and we can only stand with stricken hearts over the dispensation of providence. To use the language expressed in his inaugural, it seems as though all the blood, tears and money shed in this war were not enough to wipe out the wrongs of the oppressed, but that his life must mingle with and sanctify the sacrifice. His work is now history. The last mournful drama crowns the whole, and places Mr. Lincoln in the history of the age, second to Washington, and second to him alone."<sup>39</sup>

Robert G. Ingersoll became attorney general of Illinois by appointment of Gov. Richard J. Oglesby on Feb. 28, 1867. Oglesby was a supporter of the Episcopal church, although not a member. Ingersoll's term expired on January 11, 1869, but the agnostic was not a candidate to succeed himself.<sup>40</sup>

In passing, John E. Cassidy, a Catholic, also of Peoria, was appointed attorney general on Nov. 23, 1938, by Gov. Henry Horner, a Jew. These things could happen only in a government of the people, by the people, for the people.

<sup>38</sup> Statement to the author by Eugene F. Baldwin.

<sup>39</sup> Peoria *Daily Transcript*, April 19, 1865.

<sup>40</sup> Edwin Garstin Smith, *The Life and Reminiscences of Robert G. Ingersoll*, 42; *Blue Book of the State of Illinois, 1931-1932*, p. 700.



Attorney General Ingersoll in 1868 announced his candidacy for the Republican nomination for Governor. To Joseph Gillespie he wrote: "I should not have been a candidate if Palmer had not assured me he would not be a candidate or accept a nomination against me."<sup>41</sup> But Gen. John M. Palmer did become a candidate before the Republican convention at Peoria in May. Palmer was nominated but not before a party committee had called on Ingersoll with the suggestion that if he would recant his agnosticism he could have the place. The Colonel's response was that he would not trade his honest opinions for the presidency. Ingersoll never again sought public office.

The first of Ingersoll's published lectures, titled *Humboldt*, was delivered at Peoria in 1869. Then in order followed *Thomas Paine*, *The Gods*, *Individuality*, *Heretics and Heresies*, *Some Mistakes of Moses*, *The Devil*, and twenty other lectures, besides numerous "discussions" and interviews on subjects related to his religious philosophy.

The Colonel's "Plumed Knight Speech" with which he nominated James G. Blaine for the presidency in the Republican Convention at Cincinnati in 1876, won Ingersoll a national reputation and lasting fame as a political orator. Until the end of his days, except in 1884 and 1892, he spoke regularly for the Republican presidential nominee.

Colonel Ingersoll dedicated one of his published volumes to his favorite brother with these words: "To Ebon Clark Ingersoll, my brother, from whose lips I heard the first applause and with whose name I wish my own associated until both are forgotten."<sup>42</sup> It was said that Bob

<sup>41</sup> R. G. Ingersoll to Joseph Gillespie, April 1, 1868, original letter owned by Charles E. Gillespie, Edwardsville, Ill., photocopy in Illinois State Historical Library. The Republican State convention was held in Rouse's Hall, Peoria, May 6, 1868. Palmer received 263 votes on an informal ballot. Ingersoll got 117, S. W. Moulton, 82, and Jesse K. Dubois, 42. On the first and last formal ballot Palmer got 317 votes to 118 for Ingersoll. The State ticket included Maj. Gen. John A. Logan for Congressman-at-Large.

<sup>42</sup> *The Ghosts*, C. P. Farrell, Washington, D. C., 1878. Clinton Pinckney Farrell, Colonel Ingersoll's publisher, married Sue M. Parker, sister of Mrs. Ingersoll.



and Clark shook hands every time they met no matter how many times a day that might be. Clark died in Washington on May 21, 1879, and Bob spoke the funeral oration, beginning: "Dear Friends, I am going to do that which the dead often promised he would do for me." This tribute to his brother stands among the most exquisite of Ingersoll's utterances. If ever the great agnostic weakened in his spoken word on the possibility of an after-life it was here. In part he said: "Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word; but in the night of death hope sees a star and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing."<sup>43</sup>

Colonel Ingersoll mentioned the name of Lincoln frequently in his patriotic addresses. At a banquet of the Army of the Tennessee in Chicago, Nov. 13, 1879, attended by Gen. U. S. Grant, Gen. John A. Logan, Gen. John Pope and Mark Twain, among other celebrities, Ingersoll said: "The soldiers were the saviors of the nation; they were the liberators of men. In writing the Proclamation of Emancipation, Lincoln, greatest of our mighty dead, whose memory is as gentle as the summer air when reapers sing amid the gathered sheaves, copied with his pen what Grant and his brave comrades wrote with swords."<sup>44</sup>

Ingersoll in 1896 undertook to analyze the views of Lincoln on religion and this led him to the conclusion that Lincoln never subscribed to the doctrine of orthodox Christianity. He wrote: "I believe that I am familiar with

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<sup>43</sup> *Works*, XII: 389-91. To his brother, Dr. John Ingersoll, Colonel Ingersoll wrote on June 1, 1879, of Clark's death, saying, in part: "The world looks dark to me. We were not only brothers, we were friends. We were not only friends, but we were lovers." On the anniversary of Clark's death in 1881, the colonel wrote again to his brother, John: "Poor dear Clark! I think of him every waking moment, and most of my dreams are of him." Original letters in Illinois State Historical Library.

<sup>44</sup> *Works*, 81-84.

the material facts bearing on the religious belief of Mr. Lincoln, and that I know what he thought of orthodox Christianity. I was somewhat acquainted with him and well acquainted with many of his associates and friends, and I am familiar with Mr. Lincoln's public utterances. . . . The truth is that Lincoln in his religious views agreed with Franklin, Jefferson and Voltaire. He did not believe in the inspiration of the Bible or the divinity of Christ or the scheme of salvation, and he utterly repudiated the dogma of eternal pain."

Here Ingersoll gave the substance of statements made to him by William H. Herndon, Col. Ward Hill Lamon, David Davis, Jesse W. Fell, William G. Greene, James Tuttle and John G. Nicolay. He added: "Mrs. Lincoln said her husband was not a Christian."<sup>45</sup>

Both Lincoln and Ingersoll took a fling at writing poetry. Ingersoll was the author of a published poem at age 19. Twelve stanzas of his composition entitled "The Wavy West," signed only R. G. I., were written in April, 1852, and printed shortly afterward in the *Greenville Journal*.<sup>46</sup>

In one stanza he wrote:

Where dark haired Indian girls,  
Reclining on thy dewy breast,  
In morning dew and sunlight dressed,  
Adorned with dewy pearls.

Abraham Lincoln was 35 years old when he visited old scenes in Spencer County, Indiana, and as he wrote to Andrew Johnston of Quincy, Ill., in 1846, this unpoetical spot "aroused in me feelings which were certainly poetry; although whether my expression of these feelings is poetry is quite another question." Lincoln divided his composi-

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, XII: 247-55.

<sup>46</sup> Rogers, *Colonel Bob Ingersoll*, 76. In letters to his brother John, R. G. Ingersoll also wrote other original poetry.

tion into three or more cantos, one entitled "Bear Hunt."<sup>47</sup>  
It began:

A wild bear chase, didst never see?  
Then hast thou lived in vain.  
Thy richest lump of glorious glee  
Lies desert in thy brain.

There are twenty-one others stanzas.

But Ingersoll and Lincoln both wrote better poetry. Seven weeks before his death in 1899, the Colonel contributed a poem of sixteen stanzas, "Declaration of the Free," which was published in the *Truth Seeker* at New York City. Much of the agnostic's philosophy is expressed in this typical stanza:

The hands that help are better far  
Than lips that pray.  
Love is the ever gleaming star  
that leads the way —  
That shines, not on vague worlds of bliss,  
But on a paradise in this.<sup>48</sup>

The melancholy Lincoln, writing the first canto he sent to Andrew Johnston, turned time backward to the day when as a boy he lived on Little Pigeon Creek farm. He recalls sadness; loved ones lost. Old horrors are revived. He dwells at length on "Poor Matthew," a boyhood friend, who became a maniac, then abruptly abandons the sordid theme and pens these four lines:

The very spot where grew the bread  
That formed my bones, I see.  
How strange, old field, on thee to tread,  
And feel I'm part of thee!<sup>49</sup>

Lincoln was largely self-educated, having attended school for less than one year in the aggregate, to use his own words. Ingersoll completed his formal schooling be-

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<sup>47</sup> Paul M. Angle, *New Letters and Papers of Lincoln*, 28.

<sup>48</sup> *Peoria Star*, July 24, 1899; *Works*, IV: 415-9.

<sup>49</sup> Emanuel Hertz, *The Hidden Lincoln*, 447-9.

fore he was 18 years old and his studies at frontier subscription schools were interrupted by the frequent removals of his father. How, then, did each become a master in word painting? From what experience or reservoir did each draw for the rhythm that marked his mature written and spoken word? The answer may be found in the statements of both Lincoln and Ingersoll that they liked best of all literature the works of Shakespeare. Each placed Robert Burns second.

President Lincoln wrote of Shakespeare in a letter to James H. Hackett in 1863. He said he thought "nothing equals 'Macbeth.' It is wonderful." His other favorites of Shakespeare's plays were King Lear, Richard III, Henry VIII, and Hamlet.<sup>50</sup> Isaac N. Arnold recalled that Lincoln carried with him to read in spare moments a volume containing works of Shakespeare. Lincoln memorized and frequently recited "Holy Willie's Prayer," and he liked "Tam o'Shanter," and "A Man's a Man for a' That," all by Robert Burns. He also read Byron's poems.<sup>51</sup>

Ingersoll's lecture titled "Shakespeare" ranks among his best. In this he said: "Shakespeare was an intellectual ocean, whose waves touched all the shores of thought; within which were all the tides and waves of destiny and will; over which swept all the storms of fate, ambition and revenge; upon which swept all the gloom and darkness of despair and death and all the sunlight of content and love, and within which was the inverted sky with the eternal stars — an intellectual ocean — toward which all waters ran, and from which now the isles and continents of thought receive their dew and rain."<sup>52</sup>

Robert Burns, said Ingersoll, "pressed the world against his heart." Ingersoll visited the little clay house in which Burns was born and there wrote a poem of three stanzas in

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<sup>50</sup> *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Gettysburg edition), IX, 85.

<sup>51</sup> M. L. Houser, *Abraham Lincoln, Student. His Books*, 17.

<sup>52</sup> *Works*, III, 73.



tribute to the Scottish bard. A manuscript copy of the poem later was framed and hung in the shrine. The last stanza reads:

Within this hallowed hut I feel  
Like one who clasps a shrine,  
When the glad lips at last have touched  
The something deemed divine.  
And here the world through all the years  
As long as day returns,  
The tribute of its love and tears,  
Will pay to Robert Burns.<sup>53</sup>

Lincoln's early speeches were florid. He was 45 years old when he made what Beveridge called his "first great speech." His masterpieces were composed after he had attained the Presidency. Ingersoll's oratory attracted attention when he was 25 years old. His state-wide reputation was made by the time he was 30. He was 43 when he nominated Blaine. Ingersoll had a commanding presence and a pleasing voice. Lincoln had neither but he was able to use simple words artfully and he had the background of drama when he delivered his Farewell Address, his First Inaugural, his Gettysburg Address and his Second Inaugural. Ingersoll employed many more embellishments than Lincoln. He was fired with patriotic fervor. He was audacious and often savage. He was a dangerous antagonist in court or on the stump. He coined flip phrases. He once said, "all Democrats are not horse-thieves but all horse-thieves are Democrats." He spoke of going to hell "raw and naked." Yet he was tender-hearted, his charity knew no bounds, his neighbors called him the perfect husband and father. It was said of him as he said of his brother, that "he loved the beautiful and was with color, form and music touched to tears." From a vast vocabulary he plucked the choicest words and wove them extravagantly into a harmonious

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 119; *Peoria Book of Verse*, 33.



pattern. Rhetorically he sat right down in the lap of his jury or audience and he told them when to take out their handkerchiefs and when to stand on their chairs and cheer the flag.

At Indianapolis in 1876, Colonel Ingersoll engaged in a poetic flight of oratory since known as "A Vision of War." He began: "The past rises before me like a dream. Again we are in the great struggle for national life. We hear the sounds of preparation — the music of boisterous drums — the silver voices of heroic bugles." Continuing the Colonel speaks of soldiers going to war and of tender scenes at parting with sweetheart or wife and babes! He continues:

"The past rises before us, and we see four millions of human beings governed with the lash — we see them bound hand and foot — we hear the strokes of cruel whips — we see the hounds tracking women through tangled swamps. We see babes sold from the breasts of mothers. Cruelty unspeakable! Outrage infinite!"<sup>54</sup>

Ingersoll closed with the words: "I have one sentiment for soldiers living and dead; cheers for the living; tears for the dead."

Forty years before suffrage was granted to women by Constitutional amendment, Colonel Ingersoll was an advocate of the ballot for women. He said at Washington, D. C., in 1880: "... I am willing that every woman in this nation who desires that privilege shall vote. . . . There can be only one objection to a woman voting and that is, the men are not sufficiently civilized for her to associate with them. . . ." <sup>55</sup>

But forty years before Ingersoll, Abraham Lincoln made a brief statement advocating woman suffrage. From New Salem on June 13, 1836, in a communication to the *Sangamo Journal* of Springfield Lincoln wrote: "I go for shar-

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<sup>54</sup> *Works*, IX, 157-87.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, IX, 306.

ing the privileges of the government who assist in bearing its burdens. Consequently I go for admitting all whites to the rights of suffrage who pay taxes or bear arms (by no means excluding females).”<sup>56</sup>

According to a computation made by Dr. Louis A. Warren, published words of Abraham Lincoln number 1,078,365. By comparison, the complete works of Shakespeare contain 1,025,000 words, and the Bible 926,877 words.<sup>57</sup> *The Works of Ingersoll* (Dresden edition) consist of thirteen volumes with an aggregate of 5,815 pages, excluding biography and index, and containing approximately 1,586,600 words, exceeding those of Lincoln by 508,000.

Lincoln's political speech-making career from New Salem to the Presidential campaign of 1860 extended over 28 years. As an active campaigner for the Democratic party from 1858 until the middle period of the Civil War and thereafter as the champion of Unionism and Republicanism, Colonel Ingersoll had a service of 38 years. Only a selected few of his political addresses, have been published.

A torrent of abuse was directed at Ingersoll, particularly by small-town clergymen, who challenged the agnostic to meet the defender of the faith in debate. Ingersoll ignored what he called the “small fry” but said he was prepared to meet recognized spokesmen of the church, and this he did, orally and through publication. Contestants included Dr. Thomas DeWitt Talmage, the Rev. Henry M. Field, Cardinal Manning, and the Right Honorable William E. Gladstone.

Peoria newspapers and public officers received many letters inquiring about evil things the writer had heard about Colonel Ingersoll. A typical reply was made by Mayor John Warner, a Democrat, who admitted he did not like Ingersoll's politics and did not agree with his religious

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<sup>56</sup> *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Gettysburg edition), I, 14.

<sup>57</sup> *Lincoln Lore*, Bulletin No. 281, Lincoln National Life Foundation.

philosophies. He wrote to James McKenzie of Prince Edward Island in 1889, in part: "Mr. Ingersoll was noted for his devotion to his family, his liberal heart and charity to those in need, and his general nobility of character. His reputation was that of a sober, truthful, and honorable citizen. I consider his life a blessing and a sunshine upon the highway of life."<sup>58</sup>

First for word wizardry in Ingersoll's works is *Abraham Lincoln, A Lecture*, published in or before 1893, and reprinted several times, the text occupying 50 book pages. Pamphlet printings were sold for 25 cents. Ingersoll opened his lecture with an historical statement that began in the woods of Kentucky. Through the drama of the years the immortal tale of the many-sided Lincoln rings magically from the harmonious tongue and pen of the matchless word painter. With short and simple words Ingersoll shades the picture — now clanging with chains on the bodies of men, now ascending to the heights of political philosophy, now sounding with the drums of war, and laughing with Artemus Ward — on until "the history of his deeds made music in the souls of men."

Colonel Ingersoll portrays the dark night of assassination with five words: "And then the horror came."

The epilogue is no less musical and majestic. Ingersoll said:

"Abraham Lincoln — strange mingling of mirth and tears, of the tragic and grotesque, of cap and gown, of Socrates and Democritus, of Aesop and Marcus Aurelius,

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<sup>58</sup> E. M. McDonald, *Robert G. Ingersoll As He Is*, 44. The late Louise Guenther, 80 years old in 1933, a domestic in Colonel Ingersoll's Peoria household in 1869, told the writer: "Mr. Ingersoll was the loveliest man that ever lived." Mark M. Aiken, an avowed abolitionist, rang the bell of the Main Street Congregational Church when each important Union victory was announced. This so pleased Ingersoll that he rented a pew in the church although he did not occupy it. Stephen H. Tripp, born in 1854, told the writer that Ingersoll was a good friend of Royal H. Pullman, Universalist Minister, and occasionally went to Pullman's church because he liked the pastor.

of all that is gentle and just, humorous and honest, merciful, wise, laughable, loveable and divine, and all consecrated to the use of man, while through all, and over all, were an overwhelming sense of obligation, of chivalric loyalty to truth, and upon all the shadow of the tragic end.

"Lincoln. . . wore no official robes either on his body or on his soul. He never pretended to be more or less, or other, or different, from what he really was. . . . With him men were neither great nor small — they were right or wrong. . . . He was as patient as Destiny, whose undecipherable hieroglyphs were so deeply graven on his sad and tragic face. Nothing discloses real character like the use of power. It is easy for the weak to be gentle. . . . But if you want to know what a man really is, give him power. . . . It is to the glory of Lincoln that, having almost absolute power, he never abused it, except on the side of mercy. . . . He knew no fear except the fear of doing wrong. Hating slavery, pitying the master — seeking to conquer, not persons but prejudices — he was the embodiment of self-denial, the courage, the hope and the nobility of a Nation.

"He spoke not to inflame, not to upbraid, but to convince. He raised his hands, not to strike, but in benediction. He longed to pardon. He loved to see the pearls of joy on the face of a wife whose husband he had saved from death. Lincoln. . . is the gentlest memory of our world.

"Hundreds of people are now engaged in smoothing out the lines of Lincoln's face — forcing all features to the common mould — so that he may be known, not as he really was, but, according to their poor standard, as he should have been. . . .

"Lincoln was not a type. He stands alone — no ancestors, no fellows, and no successors. . . ." <sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Robert G. Ingersoll, *Abraham Lincoln, A Lecture*, C. P. Farrell, New York, 1894: *Works*, III, 123-73.



## INFLUENCE OF LINCOLN







## ABRAHAM LINCOLN — A LIVING TEXTBOOK IN HONORABLE PROFESSIONAL POLITICS

RALPH G. LINDSTROM \*

Our gravest civic danger lies, not in subversive doctrine, but in the tendency to embalm our liberty and our Lincoln, its greatest apostle, in monuments of marble instead of erecting living memorials of lives lived in honorable political profession and practice.

Possibly eighty per cent of people including those of advanced educational opportunity, think in terms of emotional extremes, if not fanaticism, when political reform or uplift is discussed. Too frequently the professional reformer is either a self-righteous self-seeker, or just an ill-balanced, emotionally-unstable person, whose ignorance makes his very sincerity a genuine source of danger. As to professional liberals, my own experience has caused me to feel that the place to look for the most extreme examples of unyielding intolerance is among these self-proclaimed saviors.

If the extremist reformer, the self-proclaimed liberal, has any real place in existence, it must be that of the chin fly, in Lincoln's story told in response to a report of the ambitions of Chase to displace Lincoln as President. Lin-

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coln told of driving a lazy horse, plowing corn, while his half-brother held the plow. On one trip, the horse rushed across the field so fast that even the long legs of Lincoln could scarcely keep up. At the end of the furrow, the astounded Lincoln found an enormous chin fly fastened on the horse; and promptly brushed it off. His brother asked why he did so. Lincoln replied that the chin fly was bothering the horse; but the brother observed that since the chin fly was the only way to get the horse to step along, it was a mistake to remove it. So Lincoln considered that Chase had a presidential chin fly, making him a good secretary of the treasury, and Lincoln didn't want to knock it off. Perhaps with all its unbalance and ill result, reform or self-proclaimed liberalism is a needed chin fly to bestir the great middle class of this country out of political laziness and apathy, into earnest, thoughtful activity.

Our need for reform in political office is no greater than the need for reform by way of more political intelligence on the part of citizens out of office. Why do responsible business men intuitively shrink from most self-styled reform administration? Because they believe, and rightly, that men without business experience, however sincere, may be more immediately expensive in office than a so-called regular administration, so long as the percentage of graft does not get disturbingly high. And so business executives are wont to say, "We want men of business training in office."

Well then, does success as a business executive necessarily mean success as a *political* executive? Because a president or chairman of a board has been a great success in carrying out his own policy, or that of his board of directors, as to which there is no conflict permitted, it by no means follows that he would succeed as a mayor, or president, or chairman of a council or board of commissioners. There, on every important question, one may find a dozen or more

conflicting views. Half of these may be mere "red herrings," spurious issues, merely to deflect consideration from the real issues. These red herrings are hard to recognize and difficult to deal with. But harder still are the conflicting views, sincerely and earnestly held, to be dealt with on their merits. Here is required a combination of sincerity, ability and diplomacy, to bring out the best possible solution. The art of reasonable and tolerant compromise is absolutely essential. All too often the business success is the political failure for the simple reason that through too-unyielding insistence on what he is persuaded is best, he destroys all chance of any accomplishment whatever. Political accomplishment comes, in many situations, through the best possible compromise of conflicting positions, positions held in equal sincerity and earnestness.

But we must still go one step further, if we believe representative democracy to be more desirable than any one of the forms of dictatorship. Even though we elect political Solomons to office, still we may have civic failure unless we sustain and support those placed in office. We must sustain and support, not through blind personal loyalty, nor through captious or destructive criticism, but through constructive criticism and enlightened, articulate opinion when needed. All this requires a high average level of political understanding.

When you and I claim to exercise civic intelligence in living-room orations, criticising all office-holders, and the mysterious "they" who ought to fix things, and do no more about it, then it is a serious question whether stupidity or torpidity is the best description of our citizenship.

When good men are elected to office, they are entitled to as definite, sustained support of enlightened and articulate public opinion, as we are entitled from them to honest and intelligent representation.

Should I presume to prophesy, it would be to say that

unless we in America awaken to these realizations, we are now in the sunset of representative democracy, no matter which political party has the most frequent turn in office during the twilight of American liberties as we have known them.

Is there an answer? Assuredly! But it is the least popular to those of noisy clamor. It is the answer of education — education starting with boys and girls of junior high school age, followed through senior high school and college. Probably for the next decade or two, this work must be in clubs outside of school. In these clubs young people must study politics as a profession — actual, practical politics as an honorable profession. Civics as presently taught in school is mere idealistic theory, the fruitage of which in later college and after life is political cynicism when contact with practical politics brings disillusionment.

If many of these statements be mere oft-repeated bromides, they are such because we have merely embalmed our leaders, and particularly because we have so largely merely embalmed our greatest civic example, Lincoln, in lifeless memorials of stone, and do not sufficiently memorialize them and him in our civic lives. Each generation desiring civic liberty for itself and posterity, must erect its own living memorials of lives well lived — lives which could not be better lived than after the model of Lincoln. When he prayed at Gettysburg that "this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom," he was prophetic no less than prayerful. The "new birth of freedom" was not finally accomplished in the Civil War. The "new birth of freedom" is a birth which must go on hourly, continuously, each generation achieving this new birth for itself as its justification to posterity. At the risk of tiresome repetition, one must observe that when liberty is lost, it is lost because we have embalmed it and its apostles in former generations, in lifeless memorials.



And so to Lincoln — "Abraham Lincoln, a Living Textbook in Honorable Professional Politics:"

First, we must carefully evolve and as carefully safeguard, a plan for clubs which shall, one day be as widespread as the Boy Scouts (possibly taking on where Scoutdom finishes), to study and teach practical politics, as an honorable profession, with Lincoln as our first and living textbook, and as our model. In this we must, as best we can, avoid the extreme of the apotheosis of Lincoln, as we naturally turn from the opposite extreme: sewer-rat biographers, self-proclaimed "realistic debunkers."

We may without disparagement deal with Lincoln as a man of human weakness and frailty, and yet inspire emulation by showing that his greatness was achieved, and was not an inborn gift which required no effort. The life of Lincoln fascinates us as we find increasing inspiration in learning how he displaced lack of school education with ever-enlarging educational understanding; how he practiced log-rolling once for the removal of the capital from Vandalia to Springfield, but never again as he grew into professional stature in politics; how personal invective and sarcasm gave way to dignified and impersonal discussion of issues; how spread-eagle oratory and extravagant figure of speech gave way to such beautiful simplicity and forthright integrity as the Gettysburg Address and his Second Inaugural.

In the past year I have experimented with the first unit of what we call "CIVICISM, UNLIMITED," an organization taking boys of junior high school age, selected for indications of civic interest and leadership, expecting to follow them through junior and senior high schools and college, in the study of politics — practical politics — as an honorable profession. This work has no mere Pollyanna aspect. It will be a frank, actual study of political life; but Lincoln will be our model, his life our textbook, by which all

else is to be tested. The first four meetings were spent on Lincoln's political life. The boys, at the plastic ages of fourteen and fifteen, were eager listeners and questioners. In the first meetings we study budding leadership and public address ambitions in Indiana years, his first campaign for the legislature, and the campaign methods and results.

We carefully follow Lincoln through his four terms in the State Legislature, not omitting the log-rolling of the "Long Nine" to accomplish the removal of the state capital from Vandalia to Springfield, yet carefully noting also such incidents as the protest signed with Dan Stone on the legislative resolution about slavery.

The ambitions of Lincoln for a place in Congress next follow. The trading of turns with Hardin and Baker and then Lincoln's term in Congress, and particularly the position taken by him in common with the Whigs, with respect to the Mexican War, and the apparent political eclipse which followed for Lincoln in 1849, are carefully studied.

Examples of Lincoln's evolving oratorical style, including the speech at age 28 before the Young Men's Lyceum at Springfield, are studied, to see the amount of personal invective, sarcasm and extravagant figures of speech in this earlier period. Even the threatened duel with Shields is dealt with.

But it is indicated to the boys that while 1850 marks the point when political failure seemed Lincoln's fate, nevertheless it was the point of his emergence into political greatness, into politics as a profession. True, there were five years, from 1849 to 1854, when Lincoln took little active part in public political life. We do not overlook the importance of Lincoln's experiences up to 1849 (a vital period of training in his life); but we cannot escape the conclusion that politics to him, up to that time, was more the vehicle of personal ambition, and less of genuine professional standard. However, when Lincoln commenced

the study of the six books of Euclid to teach himself geometric precision of thinking and statement, simple integrity of presentation, forthrightness of proposition, he became the architect of an unparalleled career in those wonderful years of 1854 to 1865.

Here to illustrate what professional standards mean, we consider that when men are admitted to the bar they now take an oath, in most states, which amounts to a pledge of integrity and sincerity in their contentions in the courts. Lincoln's self-administered pledge to concise integrity of argument such that his statement should be the demonstration of the truth of what he stated, was observed during the balance of his life. What a test of political conduct and statement! What a contrast with weasel-worded speeches of our promising political "messiahs," full of catch-phrase political argument. Politics as an honorable profession would promote such stature as Lincoln attained.

Then the Douglas rape of the Missouri Compromise, in the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, and the consequent return of Lincoln to public life, are next considered. The Mason and Dixon Line and the Missouri Compromise to let Missouri in as a slave state, are mapped for the boys, and the large area of the Kansas and Nebraska territories is depicted. These as a spear-head of slavery into the new northwest, show what brought the then great and honorable professional politician, Lincoln, pledged to simple integrity of statement, back into public life.

We trace him through the 1854 campaign and the formative period of the Republican Party, with the cautious waiting period until 1856, when he embraced the party in his famous "Lost Speech" at Bloomington, the Dred Scott episode and decision, the "House Divided" speech, and the concern of his advisers that this speech would lose him the Senatorship, with his reply that he had his eyes on the bigger game of 1860. Then we take up the debates with

Douglas, with careful attention to the specious "popular sovereignty" argument which Douglas was using with fair measure of success. Then the sagacious conduct of Lincoln at Ottawa and Freeport is carefully given to the boys. They are made to appreciate that situation at Ottawa, when Douglas in the opening argument of the debate resorted to his old Senate trick in debate, of challenging his opponent to answer some questions. The situation at Ottawa, with 15,000 people who came afoot, on horseback, in ox carts and carriages and by train, to hear that debate, and the fact that Douglas was then considered the bigger man, are carefully presented; then the challenge to Lincoln to answer the seven questions propounded by Douglas; and Lincoln's poise and courage in speaking for an hour and a half without even passing intimation that Douglas had asked him anything.

Then we go to Freeport and study the carefully prepared Lincoln answers to the Douglas questions at Ottawa, his speech and the four questions to Douglas, with the Douglas answer to the effect that slavery could be legally excluded from territories, by vote of the people, prior to formation of a state constitution, and the fact that Lincoln thus not only forced Douglas to admit the logical result of his "popular sovereignty" doctrine, but lost Douglas the South in the 1860 campaign. This debate occurred August 27th. Lincoln's letter to Henry Asbury on July 31st, shows that with almost uncanny political prescience Lincoln anticipated doing this very thing, and anticipated the answer of Douglas.

And so we follow Lincoln through Cooper Union, his nomination and election to the Presidency, his choice of men for his Cabinet — about half of them Democrats and most of the balance feeling little less than contempt for Lincoln; his political sagacity in handling his Cabinet and the noisy self-righteousness of the North; the Gettysburg



Address; the Second Inaugural, and his magnanimity toward the South in the closing days of the war.

But the prayer-prophecy of the Gettysburg Address; that it is for us, the living, to dedicate, to consecrate ourselves to the completion of the great task remaining before us, and the prayer for a new birth of freedom, continuous in each generation, are left uppermost in the hearts and minds of the boys.

Meetings are addressed alternately by professors in schools of government and from the universities near by, and by men in public office or otherwise experienced in practical politics. It is interesting to observe that most teachers in schools of government believe and teach that civic salvation will come through developing efficiency in the administrative side of government, paying little attention to, or even ignoring, the political office-holder. In other words, they say that if efficient engineers, lawyers, police and firemen, secretaries, clerks, and similar administrative officers and servants be supplied, the political elective officers are of little importance. While to me that is like saying that the directors and elective officers who lay down and direct the policy of a business, are of no importance, so long as efficient under-officers and other administrative help are employed; still the view is one which requires serious consideration. So we find it helpful when the academic-administrative advocate speaks and leads the roundtable discussion to have the politico-elective type present, to fret himself into earnest opposition to be presented at the next meeting. The boys hugely enjoy and equally profit by this conflict of view.

We find it necessary to avoid speakers and unit leaders who would willingly make the work a tail to their own personal political kites. Current campaigns are also avoided, because of obvious danger of disruptive conflagration. We obtain campaign material while in circulation;



and then after the heat of the campaign is thoroughly gone, study this material to see what issues were involved, what "red herrings" were injected, how the issues were dealt with, or evaded, and so forth.

But frequently — yes, constantly — civic morality is held before the boys, not as a policy, but as the very condition of the survival of representative democracy. We are endeavoring to impress indelibly on the hearts and minds of these young men, that if they love liberty, if they reverence Lincoln, her greatest American apostle, they must give earnest of the fact, as citizens or office holders, in lives which are *living* memorials to Lincoln and liberty.

Our creed, copyrighted by Civicism, Unlimited, follows:

*Promise yourself —*

TO be an honorable, trustworthy and useful citizen. . .  
of your city  
of your state  
of your country  
of the world.

TO understand politics as "the science and art of government."

TO understand and respect political life as an honorable profession.

TO learn how to understand the actual issues and purposes of all campaigns, for office or for the passage of laws.

TO learn how to examine proposed law to see first, that it is possible of accomplishment and, second, that it is for the equal good of all.

TO avoid the tendency as youths to believe that all change must be good, and as older men, that all change is bad.

TO avoid cynical and sarcastic thought or reference to American life and government.

TO think, study, understand and then tolerantly exchange views in the sportsmanship of the "Golden Rule."

TO be as enthusiastic about progress in public, political life,  
as you are in your own.

TO devote at least as much effort to public affairs as you  
expect of others.

TO let your life exemplify *Civicism*.

Will we succeed? Will our hopes be realized? We dare to hope that as the civic corruption of Eighteenth-Century England has given way to a professional and ethical attitude toward what they call the "public life," so America may follow in the footsteps of her mother land. If we fail, the fault will be ours; for in our great Lincoln we have a living model.

If this or some similar or other means of making political life an honored and honorable professional career — one highly sought after and thoroughly prepared for — be not found, then it seems all too probable that the sun which Franklin was able to call a rising sun, when drafting of the Federal Constitution was completed — the sun which seemed in eclipse while Lincoln labored to save, and until he succeeded in saving our Union, — this sun of our liberties may now, indeed, be setting.

There is a poem-prayer by Josiah G. Holland which seems apt. It is known as "God give us men," though its title is "The Day's Demand."

God give us men! A time like this demands  
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and ready hands;  
Men whom the lust of office does not kill;  
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;  
Men who possess opinions and a will;  
Men who have honor; men who will not lie;  
Men who can stand before a demagogue  
And damn his treacherous flatteries without winking;  
Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog  
In public duty and private thinking.

The test of prayer is sincerity. The test of sincerity is

to do all that we can do. We could inspire and educate young America to an ethical and professional attitude toward politics, both as citizens and as officeholders. But have we sufficient desire?



## WHAT I HAVE LEARNED FROM ABRAHAM LINCOLN

EDGAR DEWITT JONES \*

### 1

In the year 1906 I became pastor of the first Christian Church of Bloomington, Illinois, and with my family took up residence there in August of the same year. For fourteen years I resided in that corn belt city in the heart of the old Eighth Judicial District of Illinois, forever famed. When I went to Bloomington there was a little group of men still living who were young lawyers and acquaintances of Mr. Lincoln on the Circuit; and among these men were former Vice President Adlai E. Stevenson, James S. Ewing, Judge Owen Reeves, Judge Reuben Benjamin, and Isaac Newton Phillips, a recognized Lincoln scholar and orator. I can never forget an address that I heard Mr. Phillips deliver shortly after I went to Bloomington, on Washington, and then a little later I heard him on Lincoln. The address which he delivered upon the latter occasion be printed in a little volume published by McClure — a book which I take it many of you have. The work is distinguished by a very noble and dignified style, and is rich in Lincoln lore. In addition to these men there was former Governor Joseph W. Fifer, who heard Mr. Lincoln's fam-

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\* Edgar DeWitt Jones, Detroit, author, pastor of the Central Woodward Christian Church, has spoken on Lincoln in Detroit over 400 times.

ous and long-to-be-remembered "Lost Speech" in Bloomington, Illinois.

I spent many evenings with Mr. Stevenson and also in groups where these other interesting men were present and where they talked informally, fluently, and most engagingly, upon the subject of Lincoln. Some of you must have that little book that was published by the Pantagraph Company of Bloomington, bearing the title, *Abraham Lincoln by Some Men Who Knew Him*. There is a speech in that collection by James S. Ewing which I heard him deliver before the Illinois Schoolmasters' Club in Bloomington, in the centennial year of Mr. Lincoln's birth. It was one of the most informative addresses I have ever heard, by a man who knew Lincoln, and it led to my spending several evenings with Mr. Ewing through the years, listening to him expand and amplify some of the paragraphs, allusions, and incidents that are found in that book. In truth, this small book is unusually informative. And I may add, it is out of print and scarce.

As for Governor Fifer, for many years on returning to Bloomington, I seldom failed to spend an hour or so in his home. The last time I saw the Governor was in the spring of 1928, just after Easter. He had had a serious fall. He was in his eighty-eighth year, and I knew as I sat by his bedside that he was coming to the end of his long and interesting life. As I sat there, I said to him, "Governor Fifer, I have talked to you on this perennial subject of Lincoln many times, and I want to ask you one question which I meant to ask you long ago. Now I must not let it go unasked. Governor, you knew Leonard Swett; why is there not even a small biography of him available, and why is it so difficult to find any information other than just mere suface and incidental facts about this man who helped to make Lincoln President?" "Private Joe" replied: "That is a fair question. I have not been able to account



for it myself. I am not able to answer you. It is to me also an unsolved mystery. In Leonard Swett's later life he went into a sort of eclipse, and lost some of his old-time friends. This may have something to do with the fact that he is not better known to this generation. I hope that somebody who is in a position to investigate the career of Leonard Swett will do a first-class book about him. He was one of the ablest lawyers of his day. He deserves to be better known. He was Lincoln's close friend."

In my Bloomington days I also had in my congregation a woman who was in her nineties when I came to the parish. She knew Mr. Lincoln intimately. She was accustomed to see him almost every time he came to Bloomington. Her maiden name was Major, and if you are familiar with the history of Bloomington, you must know that her father was an early settler there who did much for that town. Mrs. Bradner used to tell me about dancing with Lincoln, and she remarked that while he was not especially graceful he was decidedly interesting. Even at her advanced age this gracious woman wore ringlets that came down on either side of her head and she favored a little lace cap, and was quite particular the way she was dressed when she saw her pastor. I can believe that Mr. Lincoln didn't at all object to dancing with Judith Ann Bradner in those early days.

I also had in my congregation an old gentleman named Francis Marion Emmerson, a very fine character. He was the only man of my acquaintance in those days in Bloomington who knew Mr. Lincoln and yet didn't think a great deal of him. His politics will help account for his attitude. He was a strong Douglas Democrat, and when in 1908 I delivered my first Lincoln speech before the historical society at Bloomington, on "The Religion of Abraham Lincoln," he said to me, "Well, I am interested in hearing something about Abe Lincoln's religion. The fact is, I never knew he had any." He looked upon Mr. Lincoln as

inferior to Douglas and a crafty politician. He had taken up, and received at their face value, many stories and gossip incidents and anecdotes about Mr. Lincoln, circulated by his political enemies.

Now, with such a background as this — and I have sketched it but briefly — I began to do a little in Lincoln lore myself. I wrote an article for the Centenary Edition of the *Chicago Daily Record*. You will find in that issue one of my earliest articles on Mr. Lincoln's religion. This brought me a number of letters and it opened up a correspondence with David Homer Bates, author of *Lincoln in the Telegraph Office*. These letters I have on file and I value them highly, particularly the first one, which is lengthy and revealing.

2

Having followed the Lincoln trail for many years, my first point is that of the making of books about Mr. Lincoln there is no end. There are about, so experts say, five thousand volumes on the subject, and I think that would include, perhaps, pamphlets and monographs and the like. Of this vast literature I should believe eighty per cent of it has been produced since the Lincoln Centenary in 1909. I have not made a scientific study upon which I could base this statement, but I am inclined to believe that the statement is measurably correct.

I have learned from Abraham Lincoln that no matter how great a man is and how noble his character may be, his Holy of Holies is likely to be invaded by biographers and interpreters who have little or no concern for the niceties of life or the exquisite taste of high-born gentlemen. Mr. Lincoln has suffered at the hands of these biographers and interpreters, and even more than Mr. Lincoln, Mrs. Lincoln has suffered frightfully. There has not been so tragic a woman on the American stage either before her time or since — tragic because of the singular position in which she

was placed, to say nothing about her health, which never was good after the birth of her first child. The death of Willie in Washington was a dreadful blow. Then came the awful crash of her husband's assassination. Because of her Southern birth and rearing, coupled with the fact that so many intimate relatives were in the Southern armies, some of them officers, the North looked upon her as a traitor to the Union; and there were those in the South who looked upon her as having betrayed her own people. Mr. W. O. Stoddard, Jr., told me that his father had the responsibility of opening the mail that came to the White House and the letters written to Mrs. Lincoln during those years, and that the contents of many of these letters were unspeakably vicious. Mr. Stoddard said that his father could barely endure reading them. They were, in some instances, vile, brutal, and cruel.

3

My following of the Lincoln trail through these years has taught me the uses of adversity and the high advantage of disappointment and defeat. To me Gettysburg is the saddest shrine in all America. When I visit Gettysburg it seems to me I hear someone whisper low to me, "If you have tears, prepare to shed them now." I seem to see a tall, gaunt figure speaking words of prophecy, words that the world will never let die; and along with these words I seem to hear as in solemn antiphonal, the words of another great American: "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable." Gettysburg is a shrine of both victory and defeat. Brave men of North and South, Americans all, enriched forever the soil of the battlefield of Gettysburg.

Yes, I have been taught by Abraham Lincoln the ministry of defeat and disappointment, and the high uses of adversity. Even a casual student of Lincoln realizes that his defeat for the senatorship was really a victory, for if he

had been elected over Douglas, he would not have been the nominee for President in 1860. I think any close student of Mr. Lincoln's life will feel that the Gethsemanes of the Uncommon Commoner, the gray days, the somber months, and the difficult years, contributed to his greatest triumphs. I have learned from Abraham Lincoln a certain divinity that shapes the ends of honest men and women although it is by way of the valley of humiliation and defeat. I have been taught by Abraham Lincoln, and through years of following the Lincoln trail, the necessity of perspective upon any public man's life before one can make anything like an adequate appraisal of his character, career, public policies.

Mr. Lincoln died at the right time for his fame. If he had lived it would have been much better for the South. I believe had he lived to complete his second term as President it would have broken him politically and his place in the sun would have been delayed. He would have experienced what Woodrow Wilson did in the reactions that followed those days that took him to the very pinnacle of fame and then flung him in the lowest trough of opprobrium. Mr. Lincoln died at the right time, and while he died in a dreadful way which cannot be explained away nor excused — so far as his own fame was concerned, if he had deliberately chosen the time and the way of going out, no other time or way of his going could have been more certain to fix his place among the stars.

The perspective upon Mr. Lincoln's life now shows him to be of heroic proportions and every passing year brings out some new discovery of greatness and grandeur and beauty, supplying even the humorous and the lighter touch. Any man who thinks that he can appraise a public man with any degree of justice in his own day, is of course, mistaken. George Gilfillan, who flourished along about the middle of the last century, in one of the chapters of his *A*



*Gallery of Literary Portraits*, a collection of essays and interpretations of contemporaries, declared that no really great man was ever popular in his own generation. There is truth in that. Mr. Lincoln's greatness had not dawned upon very many in his lifetime, other than his intimate friends. There was a very great question mark over the first part of Mr. Lincoln's administration and over his policies, and this was true even in his cabinet. I have been taught the wonder as well as the accuracy that comes from the perspective as we see Mr. Lincoln now silhouetted against this background of the years.

4

Another thing that I have learned from Abraham Lincoln is to winnow out of this immense literature, my favorites, conning them over and over — my rosary, perhaps one might say. I have my favorites of Lincoln lore. For instance, I think that Alonzo Rothschild's *Lincoln, Master of Men*, is the finest analysis of the qualities that made Mr. Lincoln strong and triumphant. He has another book entitled *Honest Abe*, that is greatly inferior to the book I have just mentioned. *Lincoln, Master of Men* is most effectively done and I can think of no other single volume that so brings out and illustrates the traits that made him the man that he was, master of himself, master of situations, and master of men. I am extremely fond of a biography of Lincoln by Brand Whitlock, a tiny volume. If you have a copy, you will agree with me that it is most beautifully written. There is scarcely a superfluous word in it, and to do in the compass of a couple of hundred pages a life of Lincoln that has both continuity and balance is a real achievement.

The limits of this address do not permit extended remarks on the literature about Lincoln or the many volumes to which, for one reason or another, I could wish to call



your attention. But, I cannot refrain from referring to a copy of the English edition of Allen Thorndike Rice's *Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln*, from the library of Lord Roseberry. I turned up this volume while nosing about in a London bookshop in the summer of 1935, and at once became the happy possessor. The volume bears Lord Roseberry's crest and bookplate, but best of all, there are pencilled comments at the end of a number of chapters, made by his lordship. At the bottom of the last page of the chapter by Congressman William D. Kelley, Lord Roseberry has written as follows: "Kelley, whoever he may be, writes himself down, a not inconsiderable ass." That is certainly very good.

I have my favorite poems. One of my favorite Lincoln poems is not so well known as it deserves to be by Lincoln students. It is by James Whitcomb Riley, whose father was a delegate to the Chicago Convention in 1860.

"A peaceful life; — just toil and rest —  
All his desire; —  
To read the books he liked the best  
Beside the cabin fire —  
God's word and man's; — to peer sometimes  
Above the page, in smoldering gleams,  
And catch, like far heroic rhymes,  
The on-march of his dreams.

"A peaceful life; — to hear the low  
Of pastured herds,  
Or woodman's ax that, blow on blow,  
Fell sweet as rhythmic words.  
And yet there stirred within his breast  
A fateful pulse that, like a roll  
Of drums, made high above his rest  
A tumult in his soul.

"A peaceful life! . . . They haled him even  
As One was haled

Whose open palms were nailed toward Heaven,  
When prayers nor aught availed.  
And, lo, he paid the selfsame price  
To lull a nation's awful strife  
And will us, through the sacrifice  
Of self, his peaceful life."

I am exceedingly fond of another famous Lincoln poem entitled "The Cenotaph," by James McKay. I would rank Edwin Markham's "Lincoln," Vachel Lindsay's "Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight (In Springfield, Ill.)," and Edwin Arlington Robinson's verses on Lincoln as of the inner circle of poetical tributes to the martyred President. And I would not omit Walt Whitman's "O Captain! My Captain!"

My favorite story illustrating the humor of Mr. Lincoln is one you doubtless know. I think Mrs. Honoré Morrow was the first to call it to my attention in a very remarkable article. It was at a small reception in the White House. Mr. Lincoln came into the room and put his high hat down upon a seat, and a large woman sat on it. She got up, much perturbed, as the President reached back of her, retrieved the hat, now flat as a pancake, held it up and said, "My good woman, I could have told you that this wouldn't fit you before you tried it on." I cannot conceive of any other President of the United States venturing such a remark, but it was perfectly in keeping with the humor and quaintness of Lincoln.

In 1935 I was in London, having come from Palestine and Turkey and Greece. I was at breakfast in the Regent Palace Hotel, reading a copy of *The Times*, when I saw this item: A certain Dr. Griffith Evans of Bangor, Wales, was celebrating his one hundredth anniversary — a very distinguished man; I read that in science he was known as "the father of the veterinary profession," and that he had isolated the germ of glanders. The item also said that when

he was a very young man he had met Mr. Lincoln and had some very interesting reminiscences. That interested me and I set about to meet Dr. Evans, and an interview was arranged for me two days after his anniversary. When I arrived at his home, his daughter, Dr. Erie Evans, welcomed me. "My father is still weary from the ordeal of day before yesterday," she explained, "and my only request is that if you notice that he is over-tired, you will promptly bring the conference to an end."

I had sent on ahead, at the request of his son-in-law, certain questions I wanted him to answer about Mr. Lincoln. I was admitted to the room and found him with a magnifying glass studying my questions. I was introduced to him; a tablet and a pencil were placed in my hand, on which I wrote down some additional questions. After he had answered my questions, he said to me, "Now I am going to tell you a story that I don't want you to publish." Right then I discovered the origin of a capital story of Mr. Lincoln's that has been known for years in this country. It would be recognized, I think, if I felt free to tell it here, but I refrain. It happened when Mr. Lincoln was visiting a hospital just outside of Washington, when for the second time he met this young doctor and the famous incident took place. No doubt about this story now that I had it from the man who was there.

Then, too, I have learned from Abraham Lincoln that our greatest men have their weaknesses. I have learned that Mr. Lincoln was not a demi-god. He was very human, and he had his weaknesses. I am not at all sure that he was the best judge of men in the world, and the fact that he placed a great deal of dependence upon certain men that were hardly worthy of his confidence leads me to say that he was not always able to judge character and that sometimes he placed dependence upon men who failed him in crucial

experiences. But then, what leader of men has not been similarly disappointed?

Then he was rather indifferent to the niceties of polite society. My friends in the old Bloomington days told me that Mr. Lincoln dressed as well as any lawyer upon the Eighth Circuit. No lawyer on the Circuit spent much time in selecting his neckties. It was interesting to have Mr. Stevenson tell me that Mr. Lincoln was usually dressed becomingly in dark clothes, and he never knew anyone to call Mr. Lincoln "Abe" to his face.

There was a kind of inherent dignity about Mr. Lincoln despite the fact that he loved to loaf around taverns and sit around a stove in the village store until they shut up the shop. He very much enjoyed minstrel shows and some of his cronies were rough fellows, I'll admit. It was also enlightening to have these gentlemen who knew Lincoln tell me that in the great old days gone by they do not remember to have heard Mr. Lincoln drag stories into the conversation, but to bring them in quite incidentally "to point a moral or adorn a tale."

I have learned far more from Abraham Lincoln than I have ever been able to put into words, either written or spoken. I say again that he was not a demi-god, but was very human, yet his shortcomings were as tiny spots on the glorious sun of his illustrious career.

He was patient.

He was generous.

He was temperate.

He was just.

He was noble.

He was persevering.

He was magnanimous.

He was forgiving.

He was humane.

He was trustful.

A thousand years from today I fancy no sculptor will conclude that he is ready to lay down his chisel until he has carved into stone or wrought into bronze the tired yet noble countenance of Abraham Lincoln. No portrait painter will think his life work completed until he has put at least upon canvas the familiar face of the great Kentuckian. Nor will any lord of speech be quite willing to let his tongue be silent until he has composed at least one eloquent tribute to this man who, born in a lowly cabin in the backwoods of Kentucky, a cabin with a dirt floor and lighted by a single window, climbed from lowliest earth to the farthest star.

“When the high heart we magnify  
And the sure vision celebrate,  
And worship greatness passing by,  
Ourselves are great.”





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